

THE SENSATIONAL ACCOUNT OF THE MOST HORRIFYING
RELIGIOUS MASSACRE OF THE 20th CENTURY....



THE VATICAN'S HOLOCAUST

By AVRO MANHATTAN

THE BEST SELLING AUTHOR OF "THE VATICAN IN WORLD POLITICS"

The Vatican's Holocaust

**The sensational account of the most horrifying
religious massacre of the 20th century**

By Avro Manhattan



Avro Manhattan (1914-1990)

[About the Author:](#)

Avro Manhattan was the world's foremost authority on Roman Catholicism in politics. A resident of London, during WW II he operated a radio station called "Radio Freedom" broadcasting to occupied Europe. He was the author of over 20 books including the best-seller The Vatican in World Politics, twice Book-of-the-Month and going through 57 editions. He was a Great Briton who risked his life daily to expose some of the darkest secrets of the Papacy. His books were #1 on the Forbidden Index for the past 50 years!!

The Vatican's Holocaust - Revealed at Last!

A sensational account of the most horrifying religious massacre of the 20th century. Startling revelations of forced conversions, mass murder of non-Catholics, Catholic extermination camps, disclosures of Catholic clergy as commanders of concentration camps; documented with names, dates, places, pictures and eyewitness testimony.

Contents

[A Word for the Fifth Edition....](#)

[Preface to the British Editions](#)

[Preface to the American Editions](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

New nation from old ones

The Vatican frowns on the birth of Yugoslavia - Catholic policy of penetration and disintegration - Croat Separatism and the Catholic Church - Catholic storm troopers - The Ustashi.

[Chapter 2](#)

The year of political assassinations

The murder of a Chancellor, of a Foreign Minister and of a King.

Chapter 3

The birth of a monster: the independent Catholic State of Croatia

Catholic crusaders turn into Storm Troopers - A Catholic Gestapo - How a puppet King was made - A Fascist delegation to the Pope - Ante Pavelic and Pius XII plan a secret campaign.

Chapter 4

The nightmare of a nation

The Archbishop and Bishops support a Catholic Dictator - "We have three million bullets." - Catholic concentration camps for children - Orders: "Cremate people alive."

Chapter 5

The triumph of terrorism

Punitive expeditions - The pattern of mass executions - The Franciscan pupil who cut the throats of 1,360 prisoners - Pushed alive into their graves - Orthodox Serbs crucified - Eyes torn from their sockets.

Chapter 6

"Christ and the Ustashi march together."

Catholic priests and friars lead Ustashi bands - Franciscan padres as bandits - Catholic fathers as Ustashi storm troopers - Archbishop Stepinac issues a pastoral letter - Catholic padres as Ustashi commissars.

Chapter 7

Catholic friars, priests, executioners, bishops and murderers

Orthodox clergy murdered - The Canon with the bull whip
- Catholic persuasion and bayonets - Certificates of honesty for re-Christening in the Catholic Church - Conversion or death - "He converted six thousand persons." - A Franciscan monster: Father Filipovic.

Chapter 8

The true inspirer, promoter and executor of the religious massacre: the Vatican

Catholic Bishops advocate "forcible conversions." - Archbishop Stepinac, Supreme Apostolic Vicar of the Ustashi Army - Forcible conversion legalized - Forcible conversion for the "lost souls" of Orthodox children - The Catholic Church's directives for forcible conversions - Pope Pius XII blesses Pavelic and his Ustashi.

Chapter 9

Catholic campaign of denial, smear and falsification

How the First News reached the outside world - Dr. Sekulich and the "Gestapo." - A Catholic liar at the White House - Winston Churchill issues a writ - What Mrs. Roosevelt said - "I write to save my soul." - The Archbishop's answer: "I have forwarded everything to the Vatican."

Chapter 10

The Pope, Stepinac and Pavelic try to save Croatia

They ask the "right Allies" for guns - Archbishop Stepinac is promoted head of the Ustashi Government - Ante Pavelic hides inside the Vatican - Stepinac, Cardinal Mindszenty and Pius XII prepare for a new war.

Chapter 11

The Catholic church prepares for the future

The Pope pigeon-holes a Bishop's memorandum, promotes a phony religious campaign - Stepinac is arrested and imprisoned - The World Press whitewash the Ustashi horror - The Ustashi Army are resurrected abroad - Pavelic forms a new Ustashi Government. Makes ready for "The Day."

Chapter 12

The Vatican and the USA as the defenders of the Fascist criminals of World War II

The Vatican and the USA as the protectors of the Croatian war criminals - The Vatican becomes their refuge - Falsifications of passports - Fake identities "made in Rome." - Secret Vatican-USA instructions to "validate" them.

Chapter 13

The Vatican, the Mafia and the USA. Why they enlisted war criminals, Stalin and one third of Europe

The Mafia recruited by the Vatican and the USA - The Mafia helps the Vatican save tons of holy silver - Why the Vatican and the USA enlisted war criminals - The menace of Soviet Russia - Stalin swallows up one-third of Europe - The Vatican-USA secret Alliance to stop him.

Chapter 14

The USA and the Vatican's secret plan to rescue war criminals

American and World Jewish reaction - The Jews are mobilized against the State Department and the Pope - The State Department and the Vatican are scared - They adopt a policy of "maximum prudence." - The USA bypassed Jewish vigilance, by massive equivocal legislation - Official classification of evidence - Estimated 10,000 Nazi collaborators still in the USA.

Chapter 15

The Vatican saves the Catholic war criminals of Croatia - Roman monasteries as their asylums -The Croatian Holocaust minimized

The Pope saves a top war criminal from execution - The Nuns of Rome who were Croatian Ustashis - Monasteries and Nunneries invaded - The Catholic American grand conspiracy - The man who escaped from Yugoslavia with the first documentation of the Croatian atrocities.

Chapter 16

The Croatian Holocaust - Invention or Reality? The Ambassador and the Cardinal - The Archbishop of Canterbury's fit of temper

The English Cardinal who kept his silence - An Embassy buys 2000 copies of the book - Distributions to the House of Lords and Commons - The launching of a book in Northern Ireland - The Archbishop of Canterbury's unecumenical fit of temper - The Londoner who defied him.

Chapter 17

The Ambassador and the Pope's Nuncio in a Red Embassy, a Vatican victory

The Ambassador changes his mind - No more books about the Croatian Holocaust - Communist amnesty for all Croatian criminals - Communist Yugoslavia makes peace with the Vatican - The Vatican Ambassador in a Communist Embassy; its political meaning - Ustashi settlements abroad.

Chapter 18

Ustashi terrorism after World War II

The silent efficiency of Ustashi killing - Dr. Sekulich's experience - The Serbian Convention of Chicago and the Ustashi's shadow - The lecturer who was shot and killed - The speech advocating mutual tolerance between Serbs and Croats, which saved the life of the author - The would-be killer asks for an autograph.

Chapter 19

Forty years after - crime and punishment

Effectiveness of the protective legislation of the USA for war criminals - Thirty years of efforts to have a top Ustashi arrested - Artukovic, former Interior Minister of Catholic Croatia, is extradited - He is sentenced to death - Total absence of the religious motivation of the Croatian Holocaust - Distortion of the true nature of his trial - American and world opinion hoodwinked.

Chapter 20

The Virgin Mary and the Secretary of the USA Navy call for World War III

Consecration of the World to the Virgin Mary - The Cult of Fatima - Its anti-Russian significance - Catholic volunteers with the Nazi Armies on the Russian Front - USA-Russian atomic race - USA theologians advocate atomic war - The American Secretary of Defense jumps from a 16th floor window - USA Cardinal Spellman and Pope Pius XII support "the morality of a preventive atomic war." - Ante Pavelich and the Ustashi make ready for World War III.

Chapter 21

The Grand Central European plot - the Pope, the Cardinal and CIA

The CIA and the Vatican Intelligence unite to carry on a "revolution." - They designate a Cardinal as the future Premier of Hungary - Cardinal Mindszenty's failure - He is imprisoned - He is driven into Budapest by three Hungarian tanks - The CIA and the Vatican are defeated by the Soviet invasion of Hungary - Cardinal Mindszenty as the "twelve year guest" of the American Legation in

Hungary - Death of Pius XII - The Secret of Fatima.

[Chapter 22](#)

The Malta Inquisition - vote Catholic or be damned

Catholic punishing expedition against their opponents - Catholic children as whistling political hooligans - Church bells to silence anti-Catholic speakers - The bells ring THREE SOLID HOURS to silence the Socialists - Father confessors as political advisers - Grilled in the flames of hell if you vote against the Church - Refusal of absolution to exert political pressure - Voters terrorized by vigilante padres - "Vote Catholic or be damned."

[Chapter 23](#)

Vietnam - the Croatia of Asia

The religious origins of the Vietnamese conflict - Buddhists protest against a Catholic dictatorship - The Catholic Trio of a President, an Archbishop and a Security Chief - Catholic discrimination against Buddhists - Buddha's birthday forbidden - The first 16,000 American "advisers." - President Kennedy cold-shoulders Catholic Diem - Consents to Diem "assassination." The Catholic Church "loses" the war for the USA - Collapse of the USA Anti-communist front caused by Catholic intransigence.

[Chapter 24](#)

Where will be the next Inquisition?

For more info on the Holocaust see [U.S. News and World Report.](#)

[Holocaust Archive Pictures](#)

[Croatian war criminal arrested in Argentina](#)

[Pope to "Beatify" Archbishop Stepinac](#)

Published by: Ozark Books

P.O. Box 3703

Springfield, MO 65808 USA

E-Mail at: [Ozark Books](#)

[**Back to Main Menu**](#)



Last photo of Mr. Manhattan before his homegoing in Nov. 1990

A shory biography of Baron Avro Manhattan

Born April 6, 1914, in Milan, Italy, of American and Swiss/Dutch parents. He was educated at the Sorbonne in Paris and the London School of Economics. He was jailed in Italy for refusing to serve in the Fascist dictator Mussolini's army. While imprisoned in the Alps he wrote his first book on astronomy.

During the war, Mr. Manhattan operated a radio station called Radio Freedom broadcasting to the partisans in occupied Europe. For this service he was made a Knight of Malta. His aristocratic roots meant that he was a Knight of the House of Savoy as well as a Knight Templar and a Knight of the Order of Mercedes.

His more than 20 books include the best-selling *The Vatican in World Politics*, one of the best-selling books of all time. It was translated into most major languages including Chinese, Russian and most recently, Korean.

He was a member of the Royal Society of Literature, Society of Authors, Ethical Union, P.E.N., British Interplanetary Society, etc.

His other books include:

The Rumbling of the Apocalypse, Airoldi, 1934;

Towards the new Italy (Preface by H.G. Wells), Lindsay Drummond, 1943;

Latin America and the Vatican, C.A. Watts, 1946.

The Catholic Church Against The Twentieth Century, C.A.Watts, 1947, 2nd edition,

1950;

The Vatican in Asia, C.A. Watts, London, 1948.

Religion in Russia, C.A.Watts, London, 1949.

Catholic Imperialism and World Freedom, C.A. Watts, London 1952, 2nd edition, 1959;

Terror Over Yugoslavia, the Threat to Europe, C.A. Watts, London, 1953;

The Dollar and the Vatican, Pioneer Press, London, 1956, 3rd edition, 1957.

Vatican Imperialism in the 20th Century, Zondervan, Michigan, 1965.

The Vatican Billions, Chick Pub., Los Angeles, 1983.

Catholic Terror in Ireland, Chick Pub., Los Angeles, 1988.

Vatican Moscow Washington Alliance, Chick Pub, 1982.

Vietnam . . . why did we go?, Chick Pub, Los Angeles, 1984.

The Vatican's Holocaust, Ozark Books, Springfield, MO. 1986.

Murder in the Vatican, American Russian and Papal Plots, Ozark Books, Springfield, MO. 1985.

His friends included H. G. Wells, Pablo Picasso, George Bernard Shaw, and scientist Marie Stopes.

[Return to Contents](#)

A WORD FOR THE FIFTH EDITION....

A copy of this book was hurled across St. Paul's Cathedral, London, England, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, to the stupefaction of a vast congregation gathered there to pray for Christian unity. A journalist bought a copy to use it as a "shield", expecting to be attacked by the three thousand people who had participated at the launching of the book in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, Northern Ireland, simply because they approved of its contents. The book was also kicked, trampled and spat upon by a Catholic student in Belfast.

None of these people had read a line of it.

The Anglican primate had lost his temper—and, even more tragically his reason—as swiftly as had the newsman and the university intellectualloid, at the mere sight of its title.

A striking demonstration, if there be need for one, of how religious disputes can still madden people beyond redemption.

If to this is added political strife, then the two turn into the most perilous explosive.

Nations react more irrationally even than single individuals. Since the cumulative weight of history, wishful thinking and vested interests will trigger off the most emotional fanaticisms within otherwise civilized lands.

Yet, wise is the nation which makes ready for the worst to happen.

Avro Manhattan,

London.

[Return to Contents](#)

Foreword

To the readers of the British editions:

This book has been criticized, condemned, banned, mutilated, destroyed and even burned as frequently as it has been quoted, recommended, reproduced and praised in many parts of the world, because of the events and revelations it describes. The ordinary individual cannot accept as yet the startling facts that only a few years back, for instance, the Catholic Church advocated forcible conversions, helped to erect concentration camps, and was responsible for the sufferings, torturing and execution of hundreds of thousands of non-Catholics. Deeds coolly perpetrated by her lay and ecclesiastic members. Furthermore, that many of such atrocities were carried out personally by some of her Catholic priests and even monks. One of the main purposes of this book is to relate where, when and by whom such atrocities were committed. It took the author almost half a decade of painstaking investigation before he accepted what seemed unbelievable. The result is this account, documented from as authoritative and as varied sources as possible. Among them, people with whom the present writer became personally acquainted. Some of these played no mean role in the religious, political and military events herein narrated. Others were eye-witnesses. Indeed, not a few even victims of the incredible atrocities sanctioned and promoted by the Catholic Church. The names of most of the participants, Catholic laymen, military, priests, friars, bishops, archbishops and cardinals, as well as those of their non-Catholic victims, men, women and children, including clergymen, are as genuine as the names of the localities, villages and cities where the atrocities took place. Their authenticity can be verified by anyone willing to do so. Documents and photographs of Catholic concentration camps, Catholic mass executions and Catholic forced conversions, some of which are in this book, are kept in the archives of the Yugoslav Government, of the Orthodox Church, of the United Nations and of other official institutions.

The Ecumenical revolution, although seemingly alluring, has shown itself to be nothing more than a Trojan Horse via which Catholic power, apparelled in contemporary garb, continues to assert itself as effectively active as ever. The striking samples of contemporary Catholic terrorization which occurred in Malta and Vietnam, many of which took place during the days of "good old Pope John" and, indeed, under the pontificate of Pope Paul VI, need no elucidation. They are the most damning proof that

the Catholic Church, notwithstanding all her alleged liberalization, fraternization and up-to-dateness, basically, has not changed an iota. The portentous significance of what is here described, therefore, should be carefully scrutinized. Lest the past be repeated in the future. Indeed, now. In the present.

Avro Manhattan,

London.

[Return to Contents](#)

PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITIONS:

THE VATICAN'S HOLOCAUST is not a misnomer, an accusation, and even less a speculation. It is an historical fact. Rabid nationalism and religious dogmatism were its two main ingredients. During the existence of Croatia as an independent Catholic State, over 700,000 men, women and children perished. Many were executed, tortured, died of starvation, buried alive, or were burned to death. Hundreds were forced to become Catholic. Catholic padres ran concentration camps; Catholic priests were officers of the military corps which committed such atrocities. 700,000 in a total population of a few million, proportionally, would be as if one-third of the USA population had been exterminated by a Catholic militia. What has been gathered in this book will vindicate the veracity of these facts. Dates, names, and places, as well as photos are there to prove them. They should become known to the American public, not to foster vindictiveness, but to warn them of the danger, which racialism and sectarianism, when allied with religious intolerance can bring to any contemporary nation, whether in Europe or in the New World. This work should be assessed without prejudice and as a lesson; but even more vital, as a warning for the future of the Americans, beginning with that of the USA.

Avro Manhattan,

1986

Editor's Note

An armed Serbia could have easily prevented this Holocaust. Thank God for the [2nd Amendment to the Constitution](#) which guarantees the right to bear arms. Freedom of religion and an armed citizenry go hand in hand and is the *only* guarantee that this won't happen in the U.S.

[Return to Contents](#)

Acknowledgments

The compilation of this book has required the cooperation of divers individuals, organizations and Governments. To avoid political partisanship, the author has collected documentation from all sides, using it impartially, so long as it was authenticated. Acknowledgments are due to the following:

The Government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in exile, under King Peter.

The Government of the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia, under Marshal Tito.

The Orthodox Church of Yugoslavia.

The Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church for the USA and Canada.

Adam Pribicevic, Hon. Pres. of the Independent Democratic Party of Yugoslavia.

Dr. Vladimir Belajcic, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Yugoslavia.

Dr. Branko Miljus, former Minister of Yugoslavia. Certain members of the United Nations.

Grateful personal acknowledgments are also due to: Dom Luigi Sturzo, founder and leader of the Catholic Party of Italy (renamed Christian Democratic Party after the Second World War).

Cardinal W. Godfrey, former Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop of Westminster and Cardinal Primate of England.

Lord Alexander of Hillsborough, leader of HMO, House of Lords, London, Great Britain.

Mgr. X of Vatican City.

Count Carlo Sforza, Foreign Minister of Italy.

General D. Mirkovic, the man who overthrew the Yugoslav Government after the latter had signed a pact with Hitler (March 27, 1941). Dr. M. Sekulich, the first official bearer of the details of the religious massacres of Croatia to the Allied Governments during the Second World War. Last but not least to all those eyewitnesses and even victims of the Ustashi horrors who cared to supply the author with further documentation.

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 1

NEW NATIONS FROM OLD ONES

When in 1917, during the First World War, the Papal Nuncio in Munich, E. Pacelli, secretly negotiated with the Central Powers to accomplish the Pope's *Peace without Victory*, in order to save both Germany and Austria-Hungary from defeat, he had already made his first attempt to strangle a nation as yet unborn; Yugoslavia. If the Vatican's attempt was directed at preserving its most useful Hapsburg lay partner, it simultaneously had another no less important goal: to prevent a motley of nationalities from springing out of the Empire's ruins as sovereign States in their own right. In such States, Poland excepted, Catholicism would have sunk to the level of a minority. Worse, it would have been dominated by heretical churches and their political Allies: i. e. by the Protestant and Liberal in Czechoslovakia, by the Orthodox in Yugoslavia. With its last attempt to save the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Vatican therefore struck a final blow against the yet unborn "Hussite" Czechs and the Catholic Slovaks on one side, and the Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats and Slovenes on the other, the fulfillment of their dreams lying as it did in the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian colossus.

The Emperor Charles was advised to transform the Empire into a Federation. The idea, which originated at the Vatican, was repellent to both, as it meant, besides the loosening of Imperial control, the loosening of Catholic control over the various races of the tottering Empire. But in the circumstances the alternative was total collapse. In October Charles announced the transformation of the Hapsburg Monarchy into a Federal State. The offer—which, significantly, was made only at the last moment—although accompanied by secret papal moves, left the Allies determined to end for good the rule of the double-headed Austrian eagle. President Wilson's reply to Charles, and thus to the Pope, was firmly hostile. The USA, said Wilson, admitted "the justice of the national aspirations of the Southern Slavs." It was for these people, he added, to decide what they would accept.

As far as the USA was concerned, he concluded, it had already recognized Czechoslovakia as a belligerent independent State. The American reply had sealed the fate of Austria-Hungary. On October 28, 1918, the Czechoslovaks declared their independence. On the 29th the Yugoslavs proclaimed theirs. On December 1 the Yugoslav Council invited the Regent, Alexander, in Belgrade, to proclaim the Union.

The new independent kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes—Yugoslavia—had come into being.

The birth was welcomed in certain quarters—e.g. by the Allies—and was unwelcome in others—e.g. the Vatican—to which the new nation, besides being the unnatural creature of the Allies' political blindness, was a religious aberration not to be tolerated. Orthodoxy, swept away in Russia, where it had seemed unassailable, with the birth of Yugoslavia had now become paramount in a country the population of which was more than one-third Catholic. Worse still, in addition to permitting Orthodoxy to rule Catholics, Yugoslavia was preventing the latter from setting up a wholly independent Catholic community. When to the above was added the fact that Yugoslavia, by her mere existence, represented the greatest obstacle to the long-range Catholic strategy, the Vatican's feeling, more than one of hostility, become one of implacable hatred, a wind which boded no good to the young nation. This hatred became the main inspirer of the Vatican's anti-Yugoslav strategy, the objective of which was the destruction of Yugoslavia. Having embarked on such a course, the Vatican began a vigorous campaign, the fulfillment of which to some extent depended on another factor: the collapse of Bolshevik Russia, the early disappearance of which was, at that period, taken almost for granted by everyone, particularly by the Allies, who had dispatched sundry armies to hasten her collapse. The Vatican counted, then, on a Russian collapse in order to execute its policy of a forced Catholic domination of the Balkan peninsula through the sword of Pilsudski. The creation of the Catholic Danzig-Odessa Polish Empire would have meant one thing: the death of Yugoslavia and other Balkan Orthodox and Protestant countries. When, however, Pilsudski's bloody adventure terminated and the Allies' efforts to destroy Bolshevik Russia relaxed, the Vatican changed its tactics and embarked on a new policy: destruction of Orthodoxy by penetration, instead of by force. Consequently, when in 1920 Pilsudski's Catholic Empire vanished, and the Pope set out to convert Russia, a parallel policy was pursued in connection with Yugoslavia. Although the keynote of this new anti-Orthodox strategy was penetration, its tactics were different in each country. Thus, whereas in Russia they were meant to penetrate in order, in the long run, to dominate her religious life, in Yugoslavia they consisted of penetrating Yugoslav political life in order, once Catholics had come to control it, to enhance the power of Catholicism, and thus ultimately stultify, and indeed paralyze, the Orthodox Church throughout Yugoslavia.

Such a policy, vigorously promoted, mostly by ambitious, clerically-dominated Catholic politicians in Croatia, yielded no little success. In no time Catholic clericalism became a power behind the scenes, with the result that, within a few years, the Hierarchy began to exert undue weight in the administration, not only of Croat affairs, but also of those of Yugoslavia as a whole. This alarmed several honest Catholic

Croats, notably Radich, leader of the powerful Croat Peasant Party, aware of the danger that such tactics were creating both for Yugoslavia and for Croats. Defying the Hierarchy—and thus indirectly the Vatican—he began to combat the Catholic Trojan-horse tactics, warning Croatia that, by permitting their politicians to be led by the Hierarchy in political matters, they were bound, sooner or later, to lead all Croats to disaster. Radich's counsel was followed; and for almost a decade Catholic strategy, weakened where it should have been at its strongest, was far less successful than if Radich had acted otherwise.

But in 1928 Radich was assassinated. The assassination coincided with the general overhaul of Vatican European strategy towards Communism. In that same year the Curia finally broke off its negotiations with Soviet Russia. The Papal Nuncio in Germany, E. Pacelli, led the powerful Catholic Centre Party sharply to the extreme Right, thus allying it with the forces which were to sky-rocket Hitler to power. In Italy the Vatican strengthened Fascism by signing a pact with Mussolini (1929). Fascist Catholic movements rose everywhere. An era of Catholic policy had ended, and a new one had begun. The policy of penetration had been replaced by one of active agitation and the swift mobilization of all the religious and political forces of Europe against



Strip of photographs from the Album of Terrorists, maintained by the Yugoslav Secret Police, as early as 1933. Bottom row, first left, Ante Pavelic, the future Leader of the Independent Catholic State of Croatia. Prior to the latter's establishment, all the men above, as sworn Ustashi were engaged upon the promotion of a policy of terrorism, within and outside Yugoslavia. This they did by murdering singly or collectively, political enemies or innocent people alike. They placed explosives in public places, ships or trains. For instance, a train compartment was blown up by an Ustashi bomb at Zemun, killing the family of Professor Bruneti.

Before the Second World War these men were active all over Europe.

Their most spectacular success was the simultaneous assassination of the King of Yugoslavia and of Mr. Barthou, the French Foreign Minister, during a State visit to France, 9 October 1934. The double murder was the forerunner of a series of many others which were to contribute to the birth of the Independent Catholic State of Croatia.

The Ustashi and Ante Pavelic were "protected" by Mussolini, and tacitly but effectively by the Vatican. Both supported them financially.

Bolshevik Russia. Thus, while in the West the Vatican had launched upon a global hate campaign against Communism, in the Balkans, after Radich's death, it embarked upon a policy directed at the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

Radich's successor, Dr. Macek, reorientated the Croatian Peasant Party into a rabid nationalist movement which, by becoming increasingly bold, became an active factor for the growing political tension inside Yugoslavia. From this period onward, Separatism became the keyword of Croat Nationalism, with the result that the latter began increasingly to play into the hands of the Catholic Hierarchy and thus into those of the Vatican. The Vatican's policy in the first decade implied Yugoslavia's existence as a united nation; in the second—i.e. since the emergence of a naked Separatism—it overtly aimed at Yugoslavia disintegration. In the promotion of the Vatican's new grand strategy, Yugoslavia was reckoned a major obstacle even more than in the past, in that now it was impeding the swift Fascistization of Europe and the eventual Fascist attack on Soviet Russia, with all the ensuing Balkan commotion which, it was hoped, would cause the tumbling of Yugoslavia itself. In connection with the latter, the Vatican laid down a three-fold policy:

1. (a) The detachment of Catholic Croatia from the rule of Orthodox Serbia,
2. (b) the setting up of Croatia as an independent Catholic State, and, last but not least,
3. (c) the possible creation of a Catholic Kingdom in the Balkans.

For such goals to be attained, one thing was necessary: the partial or total disintegration of Yugoslavia.

To assert that Yugoslavia succumbed thanks only to Vatican machinations would be to falsify history. On the other hand, to minimize its role would be a crude historical distortion. Factors alien to religion played into its hands. These could be summarized

as: the animosities of the Croats and the Serbs in the domestic field, the political ambitions of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany in the international. Croat Separatism became an increasingly important factor as the internal and external tension grew. Its identification with Catholicism made it almost a blind tool of the Catholic Hierarchy, and thus of the Vatican, which unhesitatingly used it to further not only its local interests, but also its vaster Balkan schemes of religio-political domination.



Typical portraits of Ustashi leaders. Men like the above were the brains behind the numberless acts of terrorism carried out by the Ustashi in Yugoslavia, Austria, Hungary, Germany, France and in other countries, chiefly from their headquarters in Fascist Italy.

(Left) Mijo Bzik, known as "Miko," was chief of the Ustashi camps in Italy, and the recruiter of the assassins who came from Yanka-Pusta. One of his main tasks was the placing of internal machines in public buildings, or crowded places.

(Centre) Eugen Kvaternik, one of Ante Pavelic's principal accomplices. He personally accompanied from Italy to France, the assassins, who went to murder the King of Yugoslavia. Pavelic created him Minister of Police when Catholic Croatia became independent.

(Right) Zvonimir Pospishil, one of the most brutal of terrorists. He belonged to a special group of Catholic Ustashi charged with the assassination of eminent personalities. He was given the task of killing King Alexander, by blowing him up in Paris had the Marseille plot failed in 1934.

The Croat leader, Radich, never tired of warning the Croats against following the Vatican in political matters; in this he echoed the voice of another great Catholic patriot, the leader of the Polish Nationalists, Roman Dmowski, whose slogan became a

by-word of certain Catholic Polish Nationalists: "Never rely upon the Vatican in political affairs."

Hostility to Vatican political directives by Catholic political leaders was born out of bitter experience: e.g. during the First World War, when Roman Dmowski, having gone to Rome to ask for help to establish Polish independence, was greeted with open disfavour, such Vatican hostility being inspired by political interests identified with those of Austria and other great European Powers who had worked against Polish aspirations for centuries. The extraordinary result of this was that the Poles never got any support from the Vatican, even when they rose against the Czars—an attitude which incensed them to such a degree that one of their great national poets, Julius Slowacki, coined the famous warning: "Poland, thy doom comes from Rome." Which subsequent events proved was more than prophetic.

Radich adopted the same slogan, although with more tact. When, however, his Party was taken over by Macek, the original ideal of Ante Starcevic was swiftly injected with a new overdose of undiluted extremism, which made it turn sharply to the extreme Right. The main exponent of this new trend was one Ante Pavelic, an individual obsessed by the idea of an independent Croatia, inspired by racialism, erected upon Fascism, wholly impregnated with Catholicism, a formidably compact miniature totalitarianism. A movement sprang out of this weird conception; its backbone a ruthless core of terrorist bands, led by Pavelic himself, whose policy consisted of blackmail, murder, plots, and assassinations. The shadow of powerful protectors from across the sea descended swiftly upon them, thus enabling them to carry on their activities in defiance of national or international procedure—e.g. from Italy and Germany, both of whom saw in Pavelic's Croatia a useful instrument for Fascist and Nazi expansion in the Balkans.

The expansionist policies of these nations often ran parallel with that of the Vatican, which, by skillfully manipulating them, could frequently promote its own interests. It did that, not by remaining only an aloof spectator of various Fascist and Nazi activities, but by promoting a most vigorous anti-Yugoslav policy of its own.



The Vatican and Fascism helped each other from the beginning. Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) ordered the Leader of the Catholic Party to disband it (1926), the better to consolidate the regime of Mussolini. The latter negotiated the Lateran Treaty and Concordat with the Church (1926-1929).

By virtue of the first, the Vatican became a sovereign state within Rome. While with the second, the Church was granted immense privileges and Catholicism was declared the only religion of Fascist Italy, which it wholeheartedly supported.

Bishops took an oath of allegiance to the Fascist Dictatorship, and the clergy were ordered never to oppose it or incite their flock to harm it. Prayers were said in Churches for Mussolini and for Fascism. Priests became members of the Fascist Party and were even its officers.

One of the main supporters of the Fascist-Vatican pact was Mgr. E. Pacelli (the future Pope Pius XII), then in Germany. His brother, a lawyer, became one of the chief secret negotiators. He is seen in this photograph standing behind Cardinal Later, the Papal Nuncio to Germany, Mgr. E. Pacelli saw to it that his brother was made a Prince.

This yielded a rich harvest sooner than was expected. While the Vatican's Fascist associates were busy engineering political or terrorist activities, Catholic diplomacy—as previously in Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, and France—came to the fore with the promotion of a powerful Catholic fifth column. This, which had already gnawed at the internal structure of Yugoslav unity, consisted of all those Croats infected with national-religious fanaticism, of the Catholic Hierarchy of Croatia, and of an illegal Nationalist Army composed of bands of Catholic terrorists, called the *Ustashi*, the last led by Ante Pavelic, supported by Vladimir Macek, leader of

the Croat Peasant Party, who in 1939 arranged for Mussolini to finance him with 20 million diners for the Croat Separatist Movement, and by [\[1\]](#) Archbishop A. Stepinac, leader of the Catholic Hierarchy in Croatia.

The specific role played by the Vatican followed the familiar pattern: use of the Hierarchy to help political and military plotters engaged in undermining or overthrowing the legal Government. Unlike its practice in other countries, however—e. g. Petain's France or Franco's Spain—here the Catholic Church attempted to erect, and indeed did erect, a State in complete accord with all her tenets. The result was a monster standing upon the armed might of twin totalitarianism: the totalitarianism of a ruthless Fascist State and the totalitarianism of Catholicism—the most bloodthirsty hybrid yet produced by contemporary society. What gives to such a creature of Vatican diplomacy its peculiar importance is that here we have an example of the Catholic Church's implementing all her principles, unhampered by opposition, or by fear of world opinion. The uniqueness of the Independent Catholic State of Croatia lies precisely in this: that it provided a model, in miniature, of what the Catholic Church, had she the power, would like to see in the West and, indeed, everywhere. As such it should be carefully scrutinized. For its significance, by transcending its local background, is of the greatest import to all the freedom-loving peoples of the world.

Footnotes

1 See *The Ciano Diaries*, 1946, pp. 46,48,50-60. [[Back](#)]

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 2

THE YEAR OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS

One day some time in 1933 an Austrian railwayman, having casually made a discovery which he thought might be of interest, was getting ready to inform his Union when he was approached by a functionary of the Austrian Government. What was the price for his silence? If he was willing to forget all about certain goods in certain carriages, a large sum would be put at his immediate disposal. The railwayman spurned the offer, passed the information to his Union, who handed it over to the Press.

Overnight an obscure occurrence became an international sensation, and what the Catholic Austrian Government had until then carried on in the utmost secrecy was promptly made known to the world. The Foreign Offices of Europe began to hum with unusual activity as the threads of a vast international plot, enmeshing half a dozen countries, gradually came to light.

What the railway trade unionist had discovered was that Austria was blatantly dealing in arms, with the connivance of Catholic Dictator Dollfuss. At this period Austria, in common with other defeated countries, was supposed neither to buy nor sell arms, nor indeed have anything to do with parties connected with arms production. The discovery disclosed to Europe that an armaments factory at Hinterberg, in Lower Austria, was in full production. More, that the Austrian factory was manufacturing rifles, not for the Austrian army, but for semi-Fascist Hungary. Highly placed officials of the Austrian Government, an extraordinary percentage of whom proved to be fervent Catholics, semi-Fascists, or, indeed, fanatical Fascists, were implicated in the smuggling.

The affair created a political furor. But more was yet to come. The rifles it was eventually discovered, were not for Hungary; they were being sent there solely as a temporary depot. The weapons in reality were intended for Fascist Italy. Had that been the end of the story, the Austrian discovery would have caused sufficiently serious international repercussions. But that was by no means all. Further investigations proved that the ultimate destination of the weapons was with certain separatists who, in accord with Mussolini, were planning an armed rising, to detach themselves from their central Government. The separatists: certain Catholic Nationalists of Croatia. The central government they wanted to fight: that of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The association of such extremists with an aggressive great Power had thus transformed a purely regional affair into an international plot. This raised awkward international complications, not merely of a diplomatic and political nature, but of a racial and religious character as well, which, by trespassing national barriers, affected the domestic and foreign policies of various countries, of which Fascist Italy was one. Mussolini had developed a grand expansionistic design of his own in connection with the Balkans. One of the first steppingstones to its fruition was the partial or, if possible, the total dismemberment of Yugoslavia. This would have implied not only the disappearance of a stumbling-block to Fascist Balkanic ambitions, but also the incorporation into Fascist Italy of former Yugoslav provinces, the most coveted of which was Dalmatia.

Italian-Yugoslav relations at this period became so strained that Mussolini began to toy with the idea of accelerating the political disintegration of the Yugoslav Kingdom by force of arms. This could result in war. Mussolini's aggressive plans were welcomed by none more than by certain Separatists (in Croatia). This for the obvious reason that a Fascist dismemberment of Yugoslavia would have given them the unique opportunity they dreamed of to set up an "independent Croatia." Mussolini, the most powerful Fascist dictator at that period, being in a position to bring about such changes, became therefore the main hope of all those who backed his anti-Yugoslav policy. These, realizing that their interests ran parallel with his, soon banked upon his active help. The understanding was of a concrete nature, thanks mainly to the fact that Mussolini had become the protector of various terrorist bands operating throughout the Balkans, the chief aims of such bodies being the destruction of the Balkan *status quo*, which conformed with Fascist Italy's expansionist designs.

In Bulgaria one of these bands was run by members of the GRIM or VRMO (Organization Revolutionnaire Interieure Macedonienne). Among other things, it was violently anti-Yugoslav. Because of this, one of its leaders, Ivan Mihailoff, nicknamed Vantcha, was subventioned by Mussolini with millions of lire. In April, 1929, Vantcha met Ante Pavelic, the Ustashi leader, near Sofia. Pavelic had recently fled from Yugoslavia into Catholic Austria, King Alexander having set up a special tribunal (January, 1929) for the protection of the State against the subversive Separatist activities of the Ustashi extremists, of whom Pavelic was the chief. The purpose of the meeting was to join forces against Yugoslavia, and to put the Bulgarian and Pavelic's terrorist organizations under the joint protection of Fascist Italy. In that year ORIM was granted 44 million lire. Pavelic visited Mussolini, and asked for financial help. He got 25 million lire, plus the promise of further financial aid and political protection to come.

On July 17, 1929, the Yugoslav Government condemned Ante Pavelic to death *in*

absentia. Pavelic, invigorated by the Duce's money and blessing, went from Rome to Vienna to organize, with ORIM and Italian Fascist agents, nothing less than a plot for the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia. The plan of the assassination had been studied in all its details by Mussolini, who, to help Pavelic's work, granted him every facility. Pavelic organized his terrorist bands or Ustashi. At first a villa at Pessario was put at his disposal; then, when his bands grew, they were installed at the Fascist camp of Borgotaro, near Bologna, where they were reinforced by a brigade of the Fascist Secret Police, the OVRA. Pavelic was further supplied with a false passport, arms, and counterfeit Yugoslav money. All this with a view to achieving the first Mussolini-Vantcha-Pavelic objective: the assassination of King Alexander. A sum of 500,000 lire was promised by Mussolini to the Ustashi who would execute the King. The attempt took place in Zagreb in 1933. It was made by Peter Oreb, a terrorist, but failed completely. Mussolini's anger knew no bounds. To make sure that the next attempt should not misfire, he charged his son-in-law, Count Ciano, with the task of organizing a second coup. Senator Bocini, Chief of OVRA, and Antonio Cortese, head of the Political Department of the Fascist Foreign Office, were put at Ciano's disposal.



King Alexander of Yugoslavia, reclining on the rear seat where he was about to expire after having been shot by the Ustashi assassins during his official visit to France, October 9, 1934.

King Alexander had gone to seek French support against the terroristic activities of Mussolini and of Ante Pavelic, whose headquarters were in Fascist Italy. Pavelic, and with him the Catholic Hierarchy, wanted the collapse of Yugoslavia so as to set up an Independent self-ruling Croatia.

The plotters were all Catholic Ustashi. On October 6, 1934 they met in Paris. On October 9 King Alexander landed at the old port of Marseilles. An Ustashi approached the royal coach, and, to the cry of "Long Live the King!", fired his revolver, killing the King and the French Minister Barthou. The assassin was killed on the spot by the police. His

accomplices were imprisoned for life. Ante Pavelic was condemned to death by France, but managed to escape.

Yugoslavia and France, meanwhile, owing to the deterioration of the political situation in the Balkans, were planning to strengthen the "Little Entente," the *Entente Balkanique*. Promoted partly by King Alexander himself, this went straight against the schemes, not only of Fascist Italy, but also of Nazi Germany, who had begun the promotion of a successor to the Kaiser's Drang nach Osten. Last but not least, it was anathema to Pavelic and his followers. The better to consolidate the Entente, King Alexander planned to visit Bulgaria and France. On receiving this news, Count Ciano summoned Ante Pavelic and Vantcha Mihailoff to Rome. There, at the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, they discussed ways and means of killing the King. Mihailoff wanted to carry out the attempt at Sofia. Ciano, Boccini, and Cortese, however, were against this, fearing that Boris, the Bulgarian King, might be killed at the same time. Boris was no mean King. The interests of three Powers depended for their success on his head being left on his shoulders. Boris' assassination, in fact, would have alienated Mussolini, the Vatican, and the House of Savoy. The preservation of Boris' life rested in the fact that he had married King Victor's daughter; that by such a marriage Mussolini counted on expanding Italian influence in the Balkans; and that the Vatican's plan was to have the Royal children brought up as Catholics, in order to install a Catholic king in Orthodox Bulgaria, and thus strangle the Orthodox Church there from above.[\[1\]](#)

In order to avoid such risks, therefore, at the next meeting which took place at the Hotel Continental in Rome, it was finally decided to kill King Alexander in France. Following this, Pavelic would stir up trouble in Croatia, while the followers of Mihailoff rebelled in Macedonia. Mussolini would intervene to ensure their success, and thus, by setting a foot in the Balkans, carry out his expansionist scheme in those regions. Once these plans had been agreed, Mussolini met the plotters in his Villa Torlonia. These were Vlada Georgief Cernozemski, a Bulgarian, who had already killed two members of the Bulgarian Parliament in Sofia; Eugene Kvaternik, later head of the police of Zagreb in the Independent State of Croatia; and three more Catholic Ustashi, Kralj, Pospisil, and Raitch.[\[2\]](#)

On October 6, 1934, the plotters met in Paris. On October 9 King Alexander landed at the old port of Marseilles. As soon as the procession began, Cernozemski approached the royal coach in which King



The body of the French Foreign Minister, Barthou, immediately after the assassination.

Monsieur Barthou, who was driving in the same coach as King Alexander, was also purposely killed by the Ustashi for his support of the King's policy. His death suited not only Mussolini but also Hitler.

Hitler had wanted to get rid of Dictator Dolfuss, of Austria, who had prevented him from incorporating Austria into Germany. On July 25, 1934, three months before the murder of King Alexander, a group of Nazis had entered the Austrian Chancellory and assassinated Dolfuss. The triple murders set the pace of Fascist, Ustashi and Nazi terror throughout Europe leading to the outbreak, in 1939, of the Second World War.

Pavelic was supported in turn by Mussolini and Hitler. But always tacitly by the Vatican, which intermittently dealt with all three to further the interests of anyone ready to further the interests of the Church.

Alexander and Louis Barthou, the French Foreign Minister, were riding, and, to the cry of "Long live the King" fired his revolver, killing both. Cernozemski was instantly killed by the police. His accomplices were arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment [3] but Ante Pavelic managed to escape, and was condemned to death, *in absentia*, by a French tribunal.

But if the first part of the Mussolini-Pavelic plot had succeeded, the second, the Pavelic revolt in Yugoslavia, was a complete failure: nothing happened. Pavelic and Kvaternik fled to Italy. The French Government asked for their extradition, but Mussolini refused, going so far as to declare that if Yugoslavia pressed for Pavelic's extradition he would consider the request a *casus belli*. Yugoslavia appealed to the League of Nations. The League, being, like the United Nations, its successor, a pawn of the Great Powers,

ignored the case and did nothing. The assassination created turmoil throughout Europe. In Berlin the reaction was ominous: Nazi Germany accelerated the promotion of her *Drang nach Osten* policy. At the sudden elongation of the Hitlerian shadow over the Central European landscape, Mussolini became cautious. Hesitation and, above all, the growing power of Hitler weakened his resolution, and soon the Duce-Pavelic adventure, having become unwholesomely risky, was shelved, pending better times.

Hitler, meanwhile, had not been idle. He had been plotting on his own, going so far as to develop a plan in Central Europe opposed to that of Mussolini, viz. the incorporation of Austria into Nazi Germany. This was being promoted at the very time when Mussolini and Pavelic were hatching their plot against Yugoslavia. Indeed, Hitler had decided on the assassination of the Catholic Dictator, Dollfuss, prior to Mussolini and Pavelic having carried out their plans against King Alexander. On July 25, 1934, in fact, a group of Nazis entered the Austrian Chancellory in Vienna, murdered Dollfuss, and attempted to seize the Government. Mussolini promptly dispatched two divisions to the Brenner Pass to impede Hitler from upsetting the Balkan equilibrium and thus throwing out of gear the schemes of Italian Imperialism in those regions. Hitler repaid Mussolini by cold-shouldering him after the killing of King Alexander. The two assassinations, however, awoke Europe to reality.

Mussolini and Hitler decided to forget their pride and reach a tacit agreement. Mussolini left Austria to Hitler, and Hitler supported Mussolini in his seizure of Abyssinia. From then onward Fascist-Nazi terror filled with ever-increasing echoes the political corridors of Europe and even of Asia: the assassination of the Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss and of King Alexander of Yugoslavia in 1934, the Fascist war on Abyssinia in 1935, Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland in 1936, Japan's attack upon China in 1937, Hitler's incorporation of Austria in the spring of 1938, Munich in the autumn of that same year, Hitler's dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1939, Hitler's attack on Poland in the autumn of 1939.

While all these ominous events followed one another, Pavelic, directly in touch with Catholic and Fascist authorities, presided over sundry plottings and intrigues, turning now to Mussolini and now to Hitler, according to which of the ambitions of the two dictators seemed to have the greater chance of success. Pavelic's strategy consisted of submitting plans to both Mussolini and Hitler for waging a terrorist campaign throughout Yugoslavia in order to force the Central Government to grant autonomy to Croatia. With the approaching storm of the Second World War, however, Hitler, having fitted Yugoslavia into a vaster scheme of his own, reoriented his policy and promoted one aimed at neutralizing Yugoslavia—indeed, at making her an ally. To avoid antagonizing the Yugoslav Government, Pavelic's activities were greatly reduced and

officially discouraged.

Hitler's policy paid him handsome dividends. When the Second World War broke out, Yugoslavia remained stubbornly neutral. Indeed, on March 24, 1941, she entered the Nazi camp, signing a pact with Germany. Pavelic's dream seemed to have been flung into the dim future. Yet he continued to wait, in the hope that the day when destiny would call on him to implement his life's work was, perhaps, not far off.

Footnotes

1. For more details of the Vatican's plan, see the author's *Catholic Imperialism and World Freedom*.[\[Back\]](#)
 2. The chief of OVRA gave them all false passports and false names. Cernozemski was given two passports, one Czechoslovakian under the name of Suck, the other Hungarian under the name of Kalemén. Kralj became Silny and Mulny; Kvaternik became Kramer; Pospisil became Nowack, while Raitch became Benes, in order to embarrass Benes, the President of the Czech Republic.[\[Back\]](#)
 3. To be eventually liberated by the Nazis in 1940.[\[Back\]](#)
-

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 3

THE BIRTH OF A MONSTER: THE INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC STATE OF CROATIA

The Yugoslavs were stunned. But not for long. Two days later, on March 27, 1941, an anti-Nazi *coup d'etat*, carried out by General Mirkovic, unsaddled the pro-Nazi Yugoslav Government. While the rest of Yugoslavia celebrated the event in Zagreb, circulars, full of threats, were found on the doors of Serbs. Pavelic, who only a few days before had been relegated to the background, suddenly found himself the centre of feverish activities. Orders were conveyed to all the Ustashi, inside and outside Yugoslavia, to be ready for action. Ustashi leaders from Germany and Italy moved at speed towards the Yugoslav frontier. The German Army moved with them. On April 6, 1941, Hitler attacked the Yugoslav Kingdom.

Many of Pavelic's followers joined the Nazi invaders; others directed their arms against Yugoslavia; still others turned plain traitors—e.g. Colonel Kren, an active fanatic, a secret member of Pavelic's army, an Ustashi who flew from Belgrade airdrome to give the Nazi Air Force the secret location of all Yugoslav aircraft, with the result that the Yugoslav war planes were destroyed on the ground by Nazi bombers, which Kren directed. Thanks to Ustashi Kren's action, the whole of the Yugoslav Air Force was thus annihilated in one single blow.

While Belgrade was still burning after the Nazi air raids, Ante Pavelic addressed the Croats by radio: "Croat soldiers," were his words, "use all your weapons against all the Serbian soldiers and officers. We are already fighting shoulder to shoulder with our new Allies, the Germans and the Italians."

On April 7 the Yugoslav Government left Belgrade for Montenegro. Two days later, on April 9, Vladko Macek, its Vice-President, in his turn deserted it. Macek was a Croat, a Catholic, and the leader of the Catholic Croat Peasant Party. Yet this individual, while acting as the leader of that Party, and, indeed, as Vice-President of the Yugoslav Government, was simultaneously plotting with Fascist Italy for the disintegration of his country. As early as 1939 Macek had, in fact, established contact with Mussolini, who had agreed to pay him 20 million dinars to finance his bold Separatist plot—that is, to destroy Yugoslavia in order to set up a Catholic Fascist State of Croatia, as was subsequently disclosed by none other than the Fascist Foreign Minister, Count Ciano.[\[1\]](http://www.reformation.org/holoc3.html)

The Minister of Commerce, another Catholic, followed Macek's example, soon imitated by a third Minister, who treacherously and for a long time had been a secret member, not only of the Ustashi, but also of Nazi Intelligence. He was, in fact, a liaison with the main Nazi Intelligence Agent in Yugoslavia, D. Tomljenovitch, former Austrian officer and a Catholic, to whom he passed details of all the secret deliberations on defense which took place in the Yugoslav Cabinet, of which he was a member.

Following all this, while Slavko Kvaternik, having arrived in Zagreb from Italy, announced the formation of the Independent State of Croatia, Macek incited his followers to recognize the New State: "I invite all the members of the Peasant Party of Croatia to recognize the change, to help the New Croatia, and, above all, loyally to obey all its laws."[\[2\]](#) Within a few days all the secret members of Pavelic's Catholic terrorist organization within the civil administration and the Yugoslav Army came to the fore, working havoc wherever they appeared; and this to such an extent that they quickly succeeded in paralyzing the prosecution of the war against Hitler.

Standing in sinister prominence among them all, the Ustashi initiated vigorous fighting in the rear of the Yugoslav units; while others within the Yugoslav Army carried out fifth-column activities to such an extent that nothing could be done according to plan. Ustashi officers like Colonel Kren fled to the Germans, to whom they disclosed vital military information. Units of Macek's "Peasant Guard" immediately became Ustashi units and disarmed units of the Yugoslav Army. The widespread disorganization created by Catholic extremists was such that it turned out to be one of the paramount factors enabling the swift Nazi conquest of Yugoslavia.

This was confirmed by Lorkovitch, Minister of the Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Croatia, in full Parliament (February, 1942):

It was thanks to the support of the Croat people and of the Croat revolution, which have shortened the duration of the war in Yugoslavia, greatly reduced the losses of the Germans and Italians, and permitted, at the Eastern frontier of Serbia, the death-blow to be given to Yugoslavia.[\[3\]](#)

The promotion of such a large treacherous body within the country would have been impossible without the active cooperation of the Catholic Church. Pavelic's terrorist bands, the Ustashi, had been morally and financially encouraged and supported by her. Indeed, their backbone had been formed by priests, monks, and even bishops. Monasteries had been used as the clandestine headquarters of the Ustashi long before the Nazi attack. Secret separatist and military activities had been disguised for years

under the cloak of religion. The Catholic priesthood in Croatia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia had repeatedly convoked so-called Eucharistic Congresses which in reality were for extremist political purposes (e.g. those held in Pozega as late as 1940, under the fictitious name of Mary's Congregation). The sundry semi-military, illegal terrorist movements were likewise screened by the mantle of religion. Most of them were affiliated with Catholic organizations under the direct supervision of Catholic Action, which was strictly controlled by the Catholic Hierarchy—e.g. the Brotherhood of the Crusaders, with about 540 societies and 30,000 members; the Sisterhood of the Crusaders, with 452 societies and 19,000 members; the Catholic Student Associations, Domagoj, and such like.

Most of the members of such religious organizations were active in sabotage, acts of terrorism, and a good number of them even participated in the treacherous disarming of the Yugoslav Army following Hitler's attack. As soon as they came into the open, many of them appeared transformed into Ustashi authorities, functionaries in Ustashi commissions, heads of district councils, or even of concentration camps. The President of the Great Crusaders' Brotherhood, Dr. Feliks Niedzelski, was nominated Ustashi Vice-Governor of Bosnia and administrative head for the Ustashi youth, while Father Grga Peinovic, also a director of Catholic Crusaders, was appointed President of the Ustashi Central Propaganda Office.^[4] Many of the priests of the Crusaders' Brotherhood and of Catholic Action took or



Archbishop Stepinac, Head of the Croatian Hierarchy, welcomes Ante Pavelic at the opening of the Ustashi Government in Zagreb, February 23, 1942.

Stepinac was a steady, zealous and efficient partner of Pavelic's Dictatorship. He supported the Ustashi Government from the beginning until the end. Indeed, even after Ustashi Croatia collapsed following the disintegration of Nazi Germany.

Stepinac was not only the Head of the Council of Croatian Bishops and of the Committee which carried out a policy of forcible conversions, he was none other than the Supreme Military Apostolic Vicar of the Ustashi Army.

When Ustashi Croatia fell in 1945 as a result of the defeat of Nazi Germany and Pavelic had to run for his life, Archbishop Stepinac, in a vain effort to save the Regime, succeeded him as Head of Ustashi Croatia.

Stepinac ordered special ceremonies in all the Catholic churches on Pavelic's birthday, and he frequently invoked the blessing of God upon the Ustashi.

gave military training, or were sworn officers of the Ustashi formations—e.g. Father Radoslav Cilavas, a Franciscan monk, who on April 10 and 11, 1941, disarmed the local gendarmerie, captured the Post Office, and drew local plans to prevent the mobilization of the Yugoslav Army; or Father Chaplain Ivan Miletic, who, in collaboration with the Nazis, led bands of guerrillas against the Yugoslav Government. In Herzegovina the centre of the Ustashi movement was located in the Franciscan monastery and in the high school of Siroki Brijeg.

On the same day as the German Army had entered the capital of Croatia, one of the chief Ustashi leaders, Kvaternik, proclaimed the Independent State of Croatia (April 10, 1941), and, while fighting between the Germans and the Yugoslav Army was still going on in the Bosnian mountains, Archbishop Stepinac called on the leader of the Ustashi and urged all Croats to support the New Catholic State. On that very day the newspapers of Zagreb carried announcements to the effect that all Serbian Orthodox residents of the new Catholic capital must vacate the city within twelve hours, and that anyone found harbouring an Orthodox would immediately be executed. On April 13 Ante Pavelic reached Zagreb from Italy. On the 14th Archbishop Stepinac went personally to meet him and to congratulate him on the fulfillment of his life-work. What was Pavelic's life-work? The creation of perhaps the most ruthless Fascist tyranny ever to dishonour Europe.

The establishment of Pavelic's dictatorship was rapid, efficient, and ruthless. Immediately on his return he reorganized the Ustashi throughout the New State by setting up local branches, known by the names of Stozer, Logor, Tabor, and Zbir, through which he initiated a veritable reign of terror. The objective of his systematic

crimes of murder, torture, pillage, and wholesale massacre was nothing less than the total extermination of all non-Catholic, anti-Fascist elements in the New State.

Simultaneously with the reorganization of the Ustashi, Pavelic set up a political body modeled on the Nazi Gestapo and on the Fascist OVRA, called Ustashka Nadzorna Sluzba (Ustashi Supervisory Service), which exercised absolute control over the whole population. This Ustashi Gestapo was composed of thirteen different types of police: Ustashi Police; Intelligence Service; Defense Police; Security



At the opening of the Ustashi Parliament, Archbishop Stepinac, after offering special prayers to God in a ceremony in the Cathedral, ordered the singing of a solemn Te Deum, as thanks to the Almighty for the establishment of the Ustashi Dictatorship.

On April 13, 1941, Pavelic reached Zagreb. On the 14th, Archbishop Stepinac blessed him.

At Easter, 1941, Stepinac solemnly announced from Zagreb Cathedral the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia.

On April 28, 1941, he issued a Pastoral Letter, ordering the Croatian clergy to support the new Ustashi State.

On June 28, 1941, Stepinac, with other Bishops, visited Pavelic. After promising total cooperation with him, Stepinac prayed for him. "We implore the Lord of the Stars to give his divine blessings to you, the leader of our people," were Stepinac's words.

In the photograph, Stepinac accompanies Pavelic to the Cathedral steps after having prayed for him and for the Ustashi.

Service; Supreme Office for Public Order and Security; County Police; Gendarmerie; Military Police; Defense Squads; Security Service of the Poglavnik, a body-guard; Reserve Gendarmerie; Police Guard; and Industrial Police. Parallel with this, Pavelic set up courts extraordinary, entitled Prijeke Sud; Pokretni Prijeki Sud (Mobile Courts); Izvanredni Narodni Sud (People's Court Extraordinary); and Veliki Izvanredni Narodni Sud (Grand People's Court Extraordinary). These courts, thirty-four in number, passed sentences after a procedure which did not offer the defendant any possibility of defense. The judges, all sworn Ustashi, condemned without examination of the charge, on the basis of *collective responsibility*. The courts could pronounce only death sentences, against which no appeal was allowed.

In addition to passing special legislation against anyone who refused to accept the New Croatia, to permit police organizations to arrest, deport, and execute at will, special tribunals to condemn to death on the flimsiest of pretexts, and, indeed, to mobilize the whole machinery of the State for legalized terror, Pavelic terrorized by means of a Statutory Order "For the direction of the Undesirable and Dangerous Persons to Compulsory Detention in Concentration Camps," dated September 25, 1941. In virtue of this, the Ustashi Supervisory Police could at will send "any undesirable persons dangerous to public order...to compulsory detention in concentration camps" (pars. I and 3). No appeal was allowed against any such decisions.

Within the briefest of periods, Pavelic and his Ustashi had become the arbiters of the freedom, the life, and the death of all men, women, and children in the New State of Croatia, which in a matter of weeks was thus converted into the most ruthless Fascist State in the world, including Nazi Germany. Yet what was the attitude of the Catholic Church when faced by such an abominable transformation? The Catholic Church, represented by the Hierarchy and the Catholic Press, following Stepinac's example, promptly initiated a feverish campaign of praise for Pavelic and Hitler. A leader of the Crusaders wrote:

God, who directs the destiny of nations and controls the hearts of Kings, has given us Ante Pavelic and moved the leader of a friendly and allied people, Adolf Hitler, to use his victorious troops to disperse our oppressors and enable us to create an Independent State of Croatia. Glory be to God, our gratitude to Adolph Hitler, and infinite loyalty to chief Ante Pavelic." [5]

A few days later, on April 28, 1941, Stepinac issued a pastoral letter, asking the whole Croatian clergy to support and defend the New Catholic State of Croatia.

At Easter, 1941, Stepinac announced from the Cathedral of Zagreb the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, thus giving the solemn sanction of Church and Vatican to Pavelic's work. On June 28, 1941, Stepinac, with other bishops, went to see Pavelic. After promising the wholehearted cooperation of the entire Hierarchy, the Archbishop solemnly blessed Pavelic, as the leader of the Croatian people: "While we greet you cordially as head of the Independent State of Croatia, we implore the Lord of the Stars to give his divine blessings to you, the leader of our people." Pavelic, it should be remembered, was the same man who had been sentenced to death for political assassinations: once by the Yugoslav courts, and once by the French, for the murders of King Alexander and the French Foreign Minister, Barthou.

In his hour of triumph Pavelic did not forget that all those who had helped the birth of a strong united Yugoslavia had contributed to the death of the Catholic Austro-Hungarian Empire, the political pet gendarme of the Vatican, and, significantly enough, as a belated tribute to the old Austrian-Vatican alliance in the Balkans, he ordered the confiscation of the real property of "any persons who had volunteered with the Allies against Catholic Austria-Hungary during the First World War" (Statutory Order, dated April 18, 1941).

This last move, like numerous others of a more tyrannical character, was followed with fascination by the Vatican, where the murderer of King Alexander came to be regarded as a great Catholic hero, blessed by none other than Pope Pius XII himself, who bestowed his paternal protection upon him and the New Croatian State. That was not enough. Pius XII, that holiest of all modern Popes, spun some of the most unholy diplomatic webs, with the specific object of bestowing upon the political creatures of the devout regicide Pavelic some kind of a king. For to the Catholic Church kings are, next to Catholic dictators, still her most cherished political dodos.



At a Ustashi Meeting. (From right to left) Archbishop Stepinac; General Roata, Commander of the Fascist forces of occupation in Yugoslavia; Field Marsbai Slavio Kvaternik; and the Commander of the German forces of occupation in Croatia.

As Supreme Military Apostolic Vicar of the Ustashi Army, Archbishop Stepinac participated in military and political functions, mingling with the Fascist, Nazi and Ustashi Commanders.

At one time Stepinac directed Ustashi guerrillas following Pavelic's flight. He established contacts and coordinated the scattered Ustashi bands, directing priests and monks to act as liaison with them.

When, finally, on November 8, 1945, Ustashi Croatia disintegrated, Stepinac reconsecrated the Ustashi Crusaders' force with a fiat in his own Chapel. After which he received "a pledge from Ustashi intellectuals" to fight to the end for the liberator of Ustashi Croatia.

He was in constant contact with the Ustashi detachments raiding Orthodox villages and towns. Also with the Nazi occupational forces in and outside Croatia.



Ante Pavelic, the inspirer, creator and leader of the independent Catholic State of Croatia. He employed terrorism, political extremism and religious fanaticism with such ruthlessness as to outsmart even his two main Fascist protectors, Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler.

He was the brains behind the assassination of King Alexander and other political murders which preceded the disintegration of Yugoslavia and thus the erection of his super-Nazi, super-Catholic independent Ustashi Croatia. He enjoyed the protection of Pope Pius XII, who helped him via diplomatic and monetary means to achieve his ultimate objective.

When Ustashi Croatia collapsed, Pavelic hid at the Vatican, then, disguised as a monk, fled to the Argentine where he set up an Ustashi Government,

waiting for "the Day." Sundry Catholic hierarchies openly helped him in exile. Pre-war acts of terrorism were begun anew. Pavelic became the victim of a murder attempt himself. He died shortly before and after the deaths of his two main ecclesiastical supporters, Pope Pius XII and Cardinal Stepinac, still dreaming of resurrecting anew Catholic Ustashi Croatia.

The throne of Croatia had originally been assigned to the scion of the Hapsburgs—i.e. Otto. As, however, Hitler suffered from anti-Hapsburg phobia, plans had to be somewhat modified. Otto had to be discarded. A feverish exploration amid the remaining forlorn royal crowned heads of Nazified Europe was speedily initiated. The new King's paramount virtue had to be a very obvious one: he must be *persona grata* to the Fuehrer. Catholic Providence, which has always provided the Vatican with an uninterrupted shower of Peter's pence—or, to be more up-to-date, with an ever-increasing shower of Peter's dollars—again proved that her cornucopia could still supply a mankind confused by all the errors of republicanism with that increasingly rare commodity: kings. Now kings have become very rare and, in fact, exceptional. Hence the need for an exceptional man to carry out an exceptional commission. The man: Pope Pius XII.

Pius XII had been the recipient of portents—that is, of phenomena with which only saints, it is said, are privileged. This even though such phenomena as a rule occur after death, and always when a rational scrutiny of the miracles has become impossible. During the Conclave of 1939, convened to elect a new Pope, Cardinal Pacelli was visited by Pius X in person. Pius X announced that the next Pontiff would be him, Pacelli. It was a miracle. It must have been, for Pius X had died almost three decades earlier. Pacelli was indeed elected Pope. The fact that he cast his own vote for himself did not really affect the issue. Pacelli became Pope Pius XII, choosing the name of Pius in honour of Pius X. [\[6\]](#)

Ten years later, in 1950, Pius XII, after patient years of self-canonization, saw the sun zig-zag in the sky of Rome. Not once, it must be noted, but on three successive days. As if this were not enough, the very Mother of God appeared to him, within the convulsed sphere, "in a spectacle of celestial movements in transmission of mute but eloquent messages to the Vicar of Christ." [\[7\]](#) It was not difficult for so extra-holy a successor of St. Peter, therefore, to find a worthy king. The fact that Pius XII had to conduct down-to-earth secret, hard bargaining with Mussolini was discreetly hushed up. The chosen one? Victor Emanuel, King of Italy, whom Pius XII himself not long before had blessed

as "the august and wise Emperor of Ethiopia," [8] following Fascist Italy's ruthless



Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) was a brilliant diplomat, a cunning politician. These characteristics made of him one of the paramount personalities of our times. A match for his fellow Fascist and Communist Dictators. He, more than anybody else outside Germany, helped Hitler to power. This he did by steering the German Catholic Party, and top Catholic leaders, to support the Fuehrer.

Pius' pet obsession was Communism. After World War 1, he allied the Church with Italian, Spanish and German Fascism, and with the USA after World War 11. He became the main instigator of the Cold War that followed.

Besides being ruthless in political matters, he was unscrupulous in religious ones. He self-sanctified himself with alleged miracles. He claimed that the Virgin Mary worked a miracle personally for him, alone. He claimed also that none other than Jesus Christ himself visited and spoke to him.

He practiced nepotism, that is, the granting of undeserved titles, riches and privileges to his own family.

He was a paranoiac, on a par with Hitler and Stalin. He transformed the Catholic Church into a global political instrument, using the Catholic masses as gullible expendable pawns in his own ideological gambles.

conquest of Coptic Abyssinia, where Fascism and Catholicism were jointly to implant Catholic-Fascist civilization. King Victor, although physically a midget, was a very

brave man. He was already resignedly suffering under the weight of two crowns: the kingly crown of Italy and the Imperial crown of Abyssinia. The idea of a third, that of Croatia, fired him with the most admirable democratic conviction that three crowns upon the head of one single man might be considered by envious masses as a genuine social injustice. So Victor, for the first time in his life, took a decision. To the chagrin of that most virtuous trinity, Pope, Duce, and Pavelic, he shouted an immortal ditty, "Now then, that's truly much to much, even for me" and refused. Following a moment of bewilderment, and hasty confabulations with the other two members of the trio, Pius XII, thanks to a supernatural hint, found a priceless substitute: the cousin of Victor, the Duke of Spoleto.

The life of a mere Duke nowadays is somewhat dull. The Duke of Spoleto, although a mere Duke, was born with above-average ducal ambition. Hence, when political fortune blew his way, he seized her tightly by the hair. Having first made quite sure that the somewhat moody Austrian commoner who had promoted himself to the Chancellorship of Germany approved of him, secondly that the son of a blacksmith from Romagna would smile on him, and last but not least that His Holiness Pius XII would give him a triple blessing, he accepted the royal Croatian sceptre with a blush. A name worthy of such a crown was selected, approved, and hailed. And so it happened that a poor unknown Duke suddenly found himself the head of a new dynasty in the Kingdom of Croatia, and became His Most Gracious Exalted Majesty, Tomislav II.

At such wonderful news a massive Ustashi delegation, led by Ante Pavelic, rushed to Rome, where, in the very seat of the Fascist Empire, on May 18, 1941, Tomislav II's gracious acceptance of the Croatian Crown took place, punctuated by clicking of military heels, Fascist salutes, and hurrahs. At the Vatican the happiness of the Pope was unbounded. Yet his fatherly heart was made a little heavy by the fact that Tomislav II, his triumphant political godchild, could not openly be given a solemn papal blessing. Pius XII was the head of the Universal Church. Catholics by the million were at that very moment fighting with the Allies to smash that very Fascist world with which Pius was on such cordial terms. In addition to that, Pius was simultaneously the head of the Vatican State and as such—oh, happy coincidence!—a king himself. To recognize his new royal colleague at that juncture would have been interpreted by the democratic camp as a breach of "papal neutrality." His Holiness, therefore, had to use caution.

Popes claim they can unlock gates—in heaven and in hell. That is why they have St. Peter's massive keys. But very often they can open back doors as well down here. And, the world being what it is, that is even more important. Particularly on occasions when the official gates of international diplomacy have to remain firmly closed. Adept in the age-old Catholic Macchiavelliana Pius XII solved the riddle triumphantly. He received

good King Tomislav one day before the ceremony of his coronation. Who could say this was a breach of "papal neutrality?" The Duke of Spoleto was not yet officially a king. His Holiness the Pope had received him before he had legally become His Exalted Majesty, King Tomislav II.

That same day Croatia was officially proclaimed a kingdom. The devout murderer of King Alexander of Yugoslavia—that is Pavelic—was granted a long and very private audience by the Pope. Only one stenographer, who cautious Pavelic had brought with him and who was made to take the oath never to reveal what he heard, was present. Strengthened by what Pius XII had told him, Pavelic called on Mussolini, with whom he signed a treaty. Following all this, the indefatigable Holy Father received and solemnly blessed Pavelic's Prime Minister and his whole Ustashi delegation. Who, again, could label this a breach of "papal neutrality?" All those excellent people had been received merely as "Catholic individuals," not as the heads of the Government of the New Croatia, declared the *Osservatore Romano*. *Honi soit qui mat y pense*. Yet the real significance of it all did not escape those who knew. Pius XII had granted all those good people a special audience, not because they were mere "Catholic individuals": he had specially received, specially blessed, and specially praised them because, while members of the Mother Church, they were, above all, the representatives of the newly born Independent Catholic State of Croatia, a political creature stubbornly nurtured and ruthlessly promoted by that most malign of all its conceivers, the Vatican.

Footnotes

1. See *The Ciano Diaries*, foreward by Sumner Welles, Doubleday & Co, Inc., 1946, pp. 46,48-50,60,87,97.[\[Back\]](#)
2. *Memoire de l'Organisation Musulmane Yougoslav*, to the National Committee for Free Europe, New York, May, 1950.[\[Back\]](#)
3. W.D. Isla, *Commentaire sur les Problemes Yougoslaves*, p. 45, Geneva, 1944.[\[Back\]](#)
4. See *Nedelja*, August 10, 1941.[\[Back\]](#)
5. See *Nedelja*, April 27, 1941.[\[Back\]](#)
6. Pius XII claimed to have seen Pius X during the conclave of 1939, and that the latter foretold him that he would become the next Pope. For more details, see *The Cross*,

organ of the Passionist Fathers, Dublin, March, 1948.[\[Back\]](#)

7. This occurred on three successive days, October 30 and 31 and November 1, 1950. The official description of this repetitive miracle, given by Pius XII's special delegate, Cardinal Tedeschini, was the following:

The Holy Father (Pius XII) turned his gaze from the Vatican gardens to the sun, and there was renewed for his eyes the prodigy of the Valley of Fatima.... He was able to witness the life of the sun under the hand of Mary. The sun was agitated, all convulsed, transformed into a picture of life, in a spectacle of celestial movements; in transmission of mute but eloquent messages to the Vicar of Christ.

Cardinal Tedeschini, at the Shrine of Fatima, Portugal, 13.10.1951. See world and Catholic Press, 14-15-16.10.1951. For more details of the concocted papal visions and the political objectives of their manufacturers see the author's *Catholic Imperialism and World Freedom* (Watts 500 pp.).[\[Back\]](#)

8. Words used by Pius XII, December 21, 1939, when blessing King Victor.[\[Back\]](#)

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 4

THE NIGHTMARE OF A NATION

The Independent Kingdom of Croatia, having thus officially sprung into existence, set forth with burning zeal to fulfill all the hopes so obstinately entertained by its religious and political promoters: the Vatican and Fascism. Inspired by the graciously remote majesty of good King Tomislav II, under the patronage of His Holiness the Pope, protected by Hitler, watched by Mussolini, ruled by Catholic terrorists, and policed by Catholic bayonets, the New Croatia began to transform itself into the ideal commonwealth as advocated by Catholic tenets.

A State, however, according to papal dicta must be regulated not only by civil but also by religious authority. So Pavelic, having determined that a religious equivalent of himself should partake of the rights and duties of rulership, saw to it that the head of the Hierarchy became a *de facto* ruler of the New Croatia. Archbishop Stepinac, the Croatian Primate, and others, members of the Hierarchy, the religious equivalent of the Ustashi, were duly elected members of the Sabor (Totalitarian Parliament). The military, political, and religious archtraves of the new State having thus been erected, Pavelic and Stepinac set out to transform its whole structure into what a true Catholic-Fascist State should be. Movements, institutions, men, and everything else were made to conform to the letter and spirit of Catholicism. All potential opponents—Communists, Socialists, Liberals—were either banished or imprisoned. Trade unions were abolished, workers' organizations became pitiful caricatures of their former selves, the Press was paralyzed when it was not altogether gagged, freedom of speech, of expression, and of thought became memories of the past. Every effort was made to dragoon youth into Catholic semi-military formations; the children were marshalled by priests and by nuns. Catholic teaching, Catholic tenets, Catholic dogma became compulsory in all schools, in all offices, in all factories, and everywhere the iron heel of the new State was felt. Catholicism was proclaimed the main religion of the State. Other religions and those professing them were ostracized, chief among these, the Orthodox; while the Jews were compelled to wear the Star of David on their clothes, all members of the Orthodox Church went in fear for their property, their personal and family safety. To be Orthodox had suddenly meant to be a potential victim. Soon, in all parks and public transport vehicles, a new inscription appeared: "Entry forbidden to all Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and dogs." The Ministry of the Interior, led by Andrija Artukovic, issued the following decree: "All the Serbs and the Jews residing in Zagreb, the Capital

of Croatia, must leave the town within 12 hours. Any citizen found to have given them shelter will be immediately executed on the spot."

While Ante Pavelic was transforming Croatia with a mailed fist, his religious equivalent, Archbishop Stepinac, facilitated the revolution by a timely nationwide mobilization of the whole of the Catholic Church. No opportunity was allowed to pass without Stepinac openly singing the praises of, or sprinkling with oral or holy-water blessings, the new Catholic Croatia, her great Leader Pavelic, the Duce, and the great Fuehrer. When dates commemorating the bloody ascent of Fascism to power were celebrated in Fascist Italy or in Nazi Germany, Stepinac, although in Croatia, celebrated them with no less fervour. Thus he punctiliously celebrated October 28, the day when, in 1922, the first Fascist dictatorship was installed in Italy. While Mussolini annually paraded His Black Shirt battalions in Rome on that date, Stepinac annually commemorated the march with speeches, prayers, and congratulations, distributed with equal generosity also to Hitler on his ever-gloomier succeeding April birthdays. When it came to his own new Fascist State, however, the archiepiscopal panegyrics became impassioned recommendations for everything done by the New Croatia. After Parliament was convoked in February, 1942, Stepinac, with all the sacred authority of the chief pillar of the Mother Church, asked the Holy Ghost to descend upon the sharp edged knives of the Ustashi, and to settle, at least while the parliamentary session lasted, upon the brow of Pavelic. Special prayers and extra ounces of incense were offered in all Catholic churches on Pavelic's birthday. [\[1\]](#)

When the pocket-sized Ustashi Navy departed for the Black Sea, to destroy, side by side with the Germans, the Red Navy of godless



A copy of the original document dealing with the conversion to the Catholic Church of all Orthodox persons employed by the Government. Issued in Zagreb by the Ministry of Justice and Religions.

Everyone had to be or to become a Catholic. Refusal meant instant

dismissal, loss of property, or arrest. And, very often, all three.

Additional decrees were issued, e.g. "Law concerning the conversion from one religion to another." On June 1, 1941, the Ustashi Premier set up an Office of Religious Affairs, in charge of "all matters pertaining to questions connected with the conversion of the Orthodox Church" (Decree No. 11,689).

Such legislation rested upon the tenet that "the movement of the Ustashi is based upon the Catholic Church," as enunciated by Mile Budak, July 13, 1941, at Karlovac.

Forcible conversions became the standard practice of Ustashi Croatia. The conversions were duly legalized by the State and gave immunity to the new Catholics, from arrest, from seizure of property and from execution.



A mass execution carried out by the Ustashi at Brode, early in 1941. Nazi troops were looking at some of the victims.

The Nazis, who for a time were posted in Croatia, were so horrified at the Ustashi atrocities that they set up special commissions to investigate them. The Orthodox Church of Serbia, in fact, appealed directly to the Nazi General Dulkeman to intervene and stop the Ustashi horrors.

The Germans and the Italians managed to restrain the Ustashi while they were under their supervision. When the Nazis left Croatia, however, the Ustashi multiplied their atrocities, unreprimanded by the Government. Since the latter's policy was one of total elimination of the Orthodox Serbian population via forcible conversions, expulsion, or straightforward massacre.

Victims were executed in groups without trial on bridges and then thrown into the river. In May 1941 the Ustashi besieged Glina. Having gathered together all the Orthodox males of over fifteen years of age from Karlovac, Sisak and Petrinja, they drove them outside the town and killed 600 of them with guns, knives and sledge hammers.

Russia, Stepinac flanked by Dr. Ramiro Marcone, the representative of that lover of peace, Pius XII, celebrated the triumphal departure in Zagreb, surrounded by the Catholic Hierarchy, mumbling Latin incantations for speedy victory by those brave aquatic crusaders. Stepinac's colleagues imitated their leader with unmatched zeal—e.g. Bishop Aksamovic, of Djakovo, who was personally decorated by Pavelic because "His Excellency the Bishop has from the very beginning cooperated with the Ustashi authorities." Or Archbishop Saric—the bosom friend of Jure Francetic, the commander of the Black Legion—who raised his right hand in the Ustashi—that is, the Nazi—salute at every opportunity, public or private.

The transformation of the Catholic Hierarchy into a *de facto* Ustashi Hierarchy had a most dreadful significance. It meant that the whole machinery of the Catholic Church in Croatia had been put at the complete disposal of the ruthless individuals determined to make of the new State a compact political and military unit, cemented by the most secure guarantees of the State's indestructibility. Such a policy implied, not only the transformation of the Croatian social, cultural, and political fabric, but also the complete extirpation of whatever was "alien" to Croatian stock and to its national religion. This required the total elimination of whoever was not a Catholic Croat. Not an easy task, as a large portion of the new State was composed of bulky racial-religious groups wholly foreign to Ustashi Catholicism. Out of a population of 6,700,000, in fact, only 3,300,000 were Croats. Of the remainder, 700,000 were Moslems, 45,000 were Jews, followed by sundry smaller minorities. Over 2,000,000 were Orthodox Serbs.

The inclusion in the New Croatia of so many alien elements was due to the territorial ambitions of Croat Separatism. These, as we have already seen, had been epitomized in the conception of the "Greater Croatia" of Ante Starcevic, who founded an extreme political party, the Croatian Law Party, subsequently elevated to the level of a fanatical National programme by Ante Pavelic. The Party's ideology, although one of racial and religious exclusiveness, accepted geographical expansion. This meant the inclusion in an independent Croatia of disputed territories, and hence of non-Catholic elements, which became automatically the greatest obstacle to the complete Catholicization of the new Croat State. To solve the problem, a policy directed at the swift elimination of all

the non-Croat, non-Catholic population was adopted and promptly set in motion. This was repeatedly and publicly enunciated by members of the Ustashi Government—e.g. on June 2, 1941, in Nova Grarfiska, Dr. Milovan Zanitch, Minister of Justice, declared:

This State, our country, is only for the Croats, and not for anyone else. There are no ways and means which we Croats will not use to make our country truly ours, and to clean it of all Orthodox Serbs. All those who came into our country 300 years ago must disappear. We do not hide this our intention. It is the policy of our State, and during its promotion we shall do nothing else but follow the principles of the Ustashi.

Dr. Mile Budak, Minister of Education and of Cults, lost no time in enlightening his listeners of the nature of such principles. During his first Press interview as a Minister, when asked what the policy of Croatia would be in relation to the non-Croat racial and religious minorities, his reply was an ominously simple one: "For them" (the minorities), he said, "we have three million bullets." This was not the boasting of a fanatical individual. It was the epitomization of a policy, coolly planned by Pavelic in concert with the Catholic Hierarchy, which was set in motion immediately when the Nazis invaded Yugoslavia. Dr. Milovan Zanich, Dr. Mirko Puk, Dr. Victor Gutich, Ustashi Ministers, unhesitatingly declared that the New Croatia would get rid of all the Serbs in its midst, in order to become 100 per cent Catholic "within ten years." On July 22, 1941, the plan was again officially confirmed by Dr. Mile Budak: "We shall kill one part of the Serbs," were his words, "we shall transport another, and the rest of them will be forced to embrace the Roman Catholic religion. This last part will be absorbed by the Croatian elements." Ways and means to enact such a scheme were swiftly adopted. The most radical and most ruthless: mass removal of Serbians from the contested zone. According to the Ministers, one-third of these were to be transported to Serbia proper, one-third would be "persuaded" to embrace Catholicism, and the remainder would be "disposed of" by other means. "Other means" soon signified biological extermination, and "persuasion" forcible conversion.

Conversion and extermination spelt one thing: the total annihilation of the Orthodox Church. That, in fact, turned out to be the official policy of the New Catholic State of Croatia. Such a policy was



"The Pit of Death" An Orthodox Serb being thrown alive into a mass grave in the notorious concentration camp of Jasenovac, in 1942.

"The Pit of Death" was reserved for those Serbs who challenged their Catholic converters. The camp, when run by the Franciscan Monk, Father Filipovic, squalled in horrors Dachau Concentration Camp. These horrors, however, were often committed in rural districts as well.

On April 28, 1941, for instance, Ustashi storm troopers encircled the villages of Gudovac, Tuke Brezovac, Klokocevac and Bolac, in the district of Bjelovar, and arrested 250 Orthodox peasants, among whom was Stevan Ivankovitch and the Orthodox priest, Bozin. Having led them all to a field, the Ustashi ordered them to dig their own graves. This done, their hands were tied behind their backs. Thereupon, they were **ALL PUSHED ALIVE INTO THEIR GRAVES.**

The barbarity created such a commotion, even among the Nazis, that they set up a Committee to exhume the bodies and took photographs as evidence. The oral process was incorporated in an official Nazi document, "Ustachenwerk bet Bjelovar."



Corpses of children starved to death in the notorious Concentration Camp of Jasenovac, whose Commandant at one time was a Franciscan Monk, Father Filipovic. Father Filipovic, following the advice of Father D. Juric, let more than 2,000 other Orthodox children die while the camp was still under his rule,

Jasenovac Concentration Camp distinguished itself because of the number of young inmates sent there. In 1942 the Camp held over 24,000 Orthodox youngsters. Twelve thousand of them were murdered in cold blood by the Commandant.

Special camps for children were set up in many parts of Croatia. Those who were sick or too old to change their religion were made to perish through neglect or where simply massacred. An Ustashi named Ante Urban, a pious Catholic, protested indignantly at his trial after the war when accused of having killed hundreds of children. He asked the Judge to consider the accusation a lie, "Since," he explained, he had killed personally "only sixty-three of them."

formally put forward in Parliament by, among others, Dr. Mirko Puk, the Ustashi Minister of Justice and Religion: "I shall also make reference to the so-called Serbian Orthodox Church," he said. "In this regard I must emphatically state that the Independent Croatian State cannot and will not recognize the Serbian Orthodox Church." [\[2\]](#)

Pavelic's triple programme was made to operate simultaneously everywhere, following the establishment of the New State. Its execution was simple, direct, and brutal. It ranged from hurried decrees—like that issued by his new Minister of Public Instruction only four days after Hitler's attack (April 10, 1941), which barred members of the

Serbian Orthodox Church from entering the University unless they had given up the Orthodox faith before April 10, 1941—to wholesale deportations, like those carried out on July 4 and 5, 1941, by the Ustashi in Zagreb; to the massacre of men, women, and children, like that of Kljuch, on July 31, on August 31, on September 1 and 2, 1941, when the "Flying Ustashi" summarily executed approximately 2,000 Serbs.^[3]

In a State insanely bent on a policy of racial-religious extermination, laws and legality, when observed, were nothing but tragic mockeries. The Courts Extraordinary already mentioned, for instance, always condemned regardless of evidence, did not permit the right to appeal, and their sentences had to be carried out within three hours of pronouncement. Thus, these courts sentenced an immense number of people to death without offering them any opportunity for defense, and their sentences were strictly applied. In most cases the courts punished "collectively," under the guise of "trials." One bench alone, for instance, that of Zagreb, within two days—August 4 and 5, 1941—sentenced to death 185 persons; that of Stem, from August 3 to 25, 1942, 217 persons; the proceedings at the mobile court at Ruma on August 3, 1942, lasted only two and a half hours, during which twenty-six persons were sentenced to death. At Stara Pazova, on August 8, 1942, the court proceedings lasted only half an hour, and eighteen people received the death sentence. At Ruma on August 10, 1942, a defending counsel appointed by the Ustashi handled the defense of twenty-five persons, whom he met for the first time at the trial, the chairman of the bench allowing him only two minutes for each person. The Tribunals, a most tragic mockery of justice, were veritable instruments of extermination, as proved by the fact that within four years one bench alone of the mobile court extraordinary of Zagreb, headed by Ivan Vidnjevic, sentenced to death 2,500 citizens.

But while the Tribunals had at least a semblance of legality, the Ustashi found means to exterminate thousands of persons by a quicker method—i.e. by dispatching them to concentration camps and disposing of them there. The institution and supervision of these camps were exclusively in the hands of Pavelic, who personally attended to their management. The arrests and deportations to these camps rested with the Ustashi, who could send to them anyone they judged to be an "unreliable person," and who had absolute authority to kill immediately on arrival anyone taken there. Indeed, there "was agreement," to quote Ljubo Milos, Commandant of the Jasenovac concentration camp, "that all sentenced to three years, or not sentenced at all, were to be liquidated at once."³ By virtue of this, inmates of the camps were murdered indiscriminately, either individually or collectively, without even a legal excuse. Thus, in March, 1943, the inmates of the Djakovo Camp were purposely infected with typhus, causing the deaths of 567 persons; on September 15, 1941, all those inmates of the Jasenovac camp who were unable to work, numbering between 600 and 700, were killed; in the camp of

Stara Gradiska, 1,000 women were killed. Of 5,000 Orthodox Serbs being taken to Jasenovac camp at the end of August, 1942, 2,000 were killed en route, the remainder were transferred to Gradina, where on August 28 they were put to death with hammers. In the Krapje Camp, in October, 1941, 4,000 prisoners were murdered; while in the Brocice Camp, in November, 1941, 8,000 prisoners were killed. From December, 1941, to February, 1942, at Velika Kosutarica, at Jasenovac, over 40,000 Orthodox Serbs were massacred, while in the Jasenovac camp, in the summer of 1942, about 66,000 Orthodox Serbs, brought from the villages of the Bosnian Marches, were slaughtered, including 2,000 children.

Children were not spared, and special concentration camps were set up for them. Nine of these were at Lobar; Jablanac, near Jasenovac; Mlaka; Brocice; IJstici; Stara Gradiska; Sisak; Jastrebarsko; and Ciornja Rijeka. The destruction of infants in these places would be incredible, were it not vouched for by eyewitnesses, one of whom has testified:

At that time fresh women and children came daily to the Camp at Stara Gradiska. About fourteen days later, Vrban [Commandant of the Camp] ordered all children to be separated from their mothers and put in one room. Ten of us were told to carry them there in blankets. The children crawled about the room, and one child put an arm and leg through the doorway, so that the door could not be closed. Vrban shouted: 'Push it!' When I did not do that, he banged the door and crushed the child's leg. Then he took the child by its whole leg, and banged it on the wall till it was dead. After that we continued carrying the children in. When the room was full, Vrban brought poison gas and killed them all.[\[4\]](#)

At his trial, Ante Vrban protested that he had not killed hundreds of children personally, "but only sixty-three."[\[5\]](#)

In 1942 there were some 24,000 children in the Jasenovac camp alone, 12,000 of whom were cold-bloodedly murdered. A very large portion of the remainder, having subsequently been released following pressure by the International Red Cross, perished wholesale from intense debilitation. One hundred of these infants, aged up to twelve months, for instance, died after release from the camp because of the addition of caustic soda to their food.

Dr. Katicic, Chairman of the Red Cross, shocked by these mass murders, lodged the strongest protest, threatening to denounce to the world this mass slaughter of infants. As a reply, Pavelic had Dr. Katicic flung into the concentration camp of Stara Gradiska.

That was not all. Even worse horrors—if worse there could be—took place in Pavelic's concentration camps. There were cases when the victims were burned alive:

The cremation at Jasenovac took place in the spring of 1942. In this they meant to imitate the Nazi camps in Germany and Poland, so Picilli had the notion of making the brickworks into a crematorium, where he did succeed, out of 14 ovens (7 a side) in making an oven for cremating people. There was then a decision to *cremate people alive*, and simply open the huge iron door and push them alive into the fire already alight there. That plan, however, excited terrible reaction among those who were to be burned. People shrieked, shouted and defended themselves. To avoid such scenes, it was resolved first to kill them and then to burn them.[\[6\]](#)

The representatives of the "only true Church" not only knew of such horrors: not a few of them were authorities in these same concentration camps, and had even been decorated by Ante Pavelic—e.g. Father Zvonko Brekalo, of the concentration camp of Jasenovac, who was decorated in 1944 by the leader himself with the "Order of King Zvonimir"; Father Grga Blazevitch, Assistant to the Commandant of the concentration camp of Bosanski-Novci; Brother Tugomire Soldo, organizer of the great massacre of the Serbs in 1941; and others. The worst abominations could hardly have been surpassed by the deeds of these individuals, the vilest betrayers of civilization and of man.

Footnotes

1. *Katolicki List*, June 11, 1942.[\[Back\]](#)

2. Speech by Dr. Mirko Puk, Minister of Justice and Religion. Excerpt from stenographic record of the proceedings of a regular session of the Croatian State Assembly, held in Zagreb, February 25, 1942.[\[Back\]](#)

3. All the crimes described in this book are authentic. For further atrocities of this kind, see the Memorandum sent to the General Assembly of UNO in 1950 by A. Pribicevic, President of the Independent Democratic Party of Yugoslavia, and by Dr. V. Belaicic, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Yugoslavia. Also *Dokumenti*, compiled by Joza Horvat and Zdenko Stambuk, Zagreb, 1946.[\[Back\]](#)

4. Statement made by witness Cijordana Friedlender, from the shorthand notes of the Ljubo Milos case, pp. 292-3.[\[Back\]](#)
5. From shorthand notes of the Ljubo Milos case.[\[Back\]](#)
6. Idem. See also official indictment of Ante Pavelic.[\[Back\]](#)

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 5

THE TRIUMPH OF TERRORISM

To complement the wholesale manhandling, torturing, and legalized killing of the Ustashi, another terrible instrument, perhaps the most execrable of all, struck with fears an already terrorized population: the "punitive expeditions" carried out by Pavelic's own special militia, the Ustashi, who in no time acquired such an infamous notoriety as to equal the most abominable human monsters of the past. These expeditions destroyed houses and villages, arrested, tortured, plundered, and often massacred their inhabitants, usually without even bothering about any excuse or appearance of legality. Whole districts, such as Bosanska Krajina, Lika, Kordun, Banija, Gorski Kotar, Srem, and regions of Slavonia, were completely laid waste by them. Numerous small towns, such as Vojnic, Slunj, Korenica, Udbina, and Vrgin-Most, were entirely destroyed, while wholesale massacres took place at a number of places, such as Rakov Potok, Maksimir (near Zagreb), the Vojnovic plateau at Bjelovar, the Osijek town park, and Jadovno in Lika. At the last named place victims were wired together in groups of twenty, taken to the edge of a 1000 feet cliff, where the Ustashi killed the first persons only, so that they dragged the others down alive with them.

Pavelic participated personally even against Croat villages—e.g. on December 1, 1941, when Cerje, Pasnik, and Jesenje were razed, on which occasion seven women, four children, and nine old men were killed and thrown into a burning house; or in 1945, when the village of Jakovlje was razed, after most of its inhabitants had been murdered.

In April, 1941, in the village of Gudovac, 200 Serb peasants were killed by Ustashi, followed by larger groups in the villages of Stari Petrovac, in the district of Nova Gradiska, and in Glina. There, in the early days of May, 1941, Ustashi from Karlovac, Sisak, and Petrinja gathered together all males over fifteen years of age, drove them in trucks outside the town, and executed them all.

Often the executions were committed in the homes of the victims, with the most primitive weapons. Some Ustashi specialized in disposing of their charges by crushing their skulls with hatchets, or even with hammers. Incredible but authenticated atrocities were committed wherever the Ustashi appeared. At Dubrovnik, Dalmatia, for instance, Italian soldiers took pictures of an Ustashi wearing two "necklaces." One was a string of cut-out eyes, the other of torn tongues of murdered Serbs.[\[1\]](#)

Mass deportations and mass executions, mainly in isolated small towns and villages, were well-planned operations. As a rule, the procedure was a simple one. Ustashi authorities summoned groups of Serbs under the pretext of recruitment for military service or public works. Once rounded up, they were surrounded by detachments of armed Ustashi, taken outside the village, and executed. In the mountainous regions of Upper Dalmatia, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, women and children were taken to remote spots and massacred. In Brcko, the home town of Dzafer Kulenovic, Ustashi Deputy Prime Minister, the prisoners were executed on bridges and then thrown into the river.

At the beginning of May, 1941, the Ustashi besieged Glina, and, having gathered all Orthodox males over fifteen years of age from Karlovac, Sisak, and Petrinja, drove them outside the town and killed all 600 of them with guns, knives, and sledge-hammers. The following day all the other Serbs were also murdered. The center of the massacre was in the village of Bosanski Grabovac.

On August 3, 1941, over 3,000 Serbs were Likewise massacred in Vrgin-Most. On July 29, 1941, Bozidar Cerovski, chief of the Ustashi police in Zagreb, arrived in the locality of Vojnic; having rounded up more than 3,000 Serbs from Krnjak, Krstinje, Siroka Reka, Slunj, Rakovica, and other villages, he led them to Pavkovitch, where he had them all massacred near a village mill. In the villages of Baska, Perna, and Podgomolje, Bosanska Krupa district, in the summer of 1941, 540 women and children were locked in houses, which were then set on fire.

In the village of Crevarevac about 600 people were burned in their houses. In the district of Cazin, at Mlinici Smiljanic, more than sixty women and children were burned to death. Five hundred people were massacred at Bugojno. At Slavonska Pozega, 500 peasants, brought from Bosnia, were



Ustashi cutting the throat of one of their Serbian Orthodox victims. Notice

how a Ustashi is holding a vessel to collect the first spurt of blood and thus prevent their uniforms from being blood stained. The brutal crime—one of many—look place near Cajeice in 1943.

This type of execution was not exceptional. Some Ustashi specialized in dispatching their Orthodox prisoners in this manner.

Catholic priests, friars, and, indeed, even some of their pupils, followed their example. The case of Peter Brzica is undoubtedly one of the most incredible in this category. Brzica was a law student and an ardent member of the foremost Catholic organization called the Catholic Crusaders.

During the day and night of 29th August 1942, Brzica cut the throats of 1300 prisoners in the Concentration Camp of Jasenovac. He was rewarded with a gold watch and proclaimed King of Cutthroats. Dr. Nikola Kilolic, a Croat and a Catholic, was an eyewitness to the deed.



From left to right: Djuro Vranjesh, the author, and Slanko Djokie.

Djuro Vranjesh, Orthodox Serb, was born at Selo Cetina, Velika, Dalmatia. His uncle, Illija A. Vranjes, one day in July 1941 was arrested by a detachment of Ustashi, who without even bothering to give any legal excuse tortured him to death, hacking him to pieces, while still alive. This they did with such horrifying fiendishness that once he was finally dead, his nephew, Djuro Vranjesh, seen above, had to use a blanket in which to collect the chopped members of the body.

On the 30 January 1942 the Ustashi descended on the village of Bosanska Ribnica, where Stanko Djokic (above, right) lived with his family. While he was up in the woods the Ustashi dragged his wife and her five children

to the banks of the nearby little river of Ribaica, and without even asking them if they wanted to become Catholics, massacred the lot. Six months later, when Stanko Djokic came back, he found the six corpses of his family still lying there where they had been killed. He buried them with his own hands.

killed. In some districts of Stem, in the summer of 1942, over 6,000 Serbs were killed. At Bihac, within one single day in June, 1941, 2,000 Serbs were killed; while during July and August of the same year over 12,000 more were massacred. In the Bosanska Krupa district, in the summer of 1941, a total of 15,000 people were killed.

Such mass murders were carried out in the most systematic fashion, and were often planned directly from Zagreb. At times they were semi-legalized by statutory orders. For instance, On October 2, 1941, Pavelic issued a "statutory order" that in any case of attack against the Ustashi, as a reprisal, without any court procedure, ten persons to be chosen by the police were to be shot. On October 30, 1943, in another "statutory order" he ordered reprisals by shooting, hanging, or sending to concentration camps hostages to be chosen by the police, together with their parents, children, and spouses. On June 30, 1944, he appointed a special Deputy for pronouncing such measures of reprisal. Under these orders a large number of citizens were shot, hanged, or taken to concentration camps without any trial. At Ruma on August 14, 1942, for instance, ninety hostages were shot; at Sremska Mitrovica, on August 19, 1942, another ninety; and at Vukovar, on August 24, 1942, 140 hostages.

The worst atrocities, strange as it may seem, were carried out by members of the intelligentsia. The case of Peter Brzica is undoubtedly one of the most incredible in this category. Peter Brzica had attended the Franciscan College at Siroki Brijeg, Herzegovina, was a law student, and a member of the Catholic organization of the Crusaders (Krizari). In the concentration camp at Jasenovac, on the night of August 29, 1942, orders were issued for executions. Bets were made as to who could liquidate the largest number of inmates. Peter Brzica cut the throats of 1,360 prisoners with a specially sharp butcher's knife. Having been proclaimed the prize-winner of the competition, he was elected King of the Cut-throats. A gold watch, a silver service, and a roasted sucking pig and wine were his other rewards. A doctor, Dr. Nikola Kilolic, himself a Croat, was an eyewitness in the camp when the event took place, and subsequently testified to the authenticity of this astonishing deed.[\[2\]](#)

Mass murders were supplemented by the massacre of individuals and of small numbers,

as part of the well-calculated policy of the Government, which had them carried out uninterrupted in rural districts, with a view to terrorizing the populations. Cases of the utmost ferocity which occurred all over Croatia would be unbelievable were they not authenticated. In September, 1942, the Ustashi carried out a raid on the village of Dukovsko, and killed anyone on sight. Among other deeds they threw eight men into a pit. One of these saved himself by getting hold of a protruding rock. The Ustashi, noticing this, amused themselves by hurling heavy stones at him until he dropped to the bottom and died. Others—mostly people who were related, or members of the same family—were tied together and similarly thrown into a pit. In July, 1941, a youth of sixteen, Slavko Popovic, was taken by the Ustashi to a field, ordered to dig a grave, killed while doing so, and buried in it. On September 20, 1942, a group of escaping people were caught by the Ustashi. All of them—fifty-four men and women—were massacred, their bodies heaped up and set on fire. In June, 1943, the Ustashi, passing through the village of Zijimet, rounded up those who had not had time to escape—seventy-four old men, women, and children—put them into a shed, which they set on fire. All were burned alive. Among them were the aunt and her two children of Vojislav Zivanic, who lost twenty-five members of his large family, including his father and brother, massacred by the Ustashi during these raids.[\[3\]](#)

These were not isolated instances. The Ustashi more often than not massacred all the inhabitants of Serb villages, callously torturing and killing even children, and then setting the villages on fire. In the village of Susnjari, for instance, the Ustashi, after having killed most of the inhabitants, led away about twenty surviving children, whom they tied to the threshold of a big barn, which was then set on fire. Most of the children, of an average age of about ten, were burned alive. The few who survived, horribly scorched, were eventually killed. [\[4\]](#) Eye-witnesses testified to similar occurrences:

In the village of Gorevac, on September 13, 1941, children of about 3 years of age were impaled. In some places mothers threw themselves down with children in their arms, and one stake perforated mother and child. Some young girls had their breasts tied or cut, others had their hands made to pass through them. Men had their ears and noses sawn away, and eyes had been uprooted from their sockets." [\[5\]](#)

On April 28, 1941, Ustashi encircled the villages of (Judovac, Tuke, Brezovac, Klokocevac, and Bolac, in the district of Bjelovar,



Orthodox worshippers, when not dispatched to concentration camps, suffered the same fate as their clergy. Congregations, unless willing to change their religion, were not only persecuted, hunted down and arrested; but, at times, besides being massacred by the Ustashi bayonets or machine guns, they were killed within their own churches.

There were instances even when they were burned alive within them.

To terrorize the population into becoming Catholic, the Ustashi very often hanged lay Orthodox Leaders and their Orthodox parish priests during mass executions under the very eyes of the faithful. This was one of the most tangible methods of "persuasion" whenever the Orthodox proved obdurate.

Those who escaped with their lives were sent to concentration camps, while about 700 that is, one quarter of the total number of Orthodox priests—were murdered by the Ustashi in this manner.

Above, Orthodox priests and Serbs, hanged together for defying the policy of the Ustashi and of the Catholic clergy.



The ordinary Orthodox clergy became the target of Ustashi Catholic ferocity. Priests were imprisoned, hunted down, or simply massacred.

Orthodox priests, before being executed or hanged, very often were horribly tortured, e.g. Father Branko Dobrosavlievich, from Velinn, who had to read the obituary of his own son, whom the Ustashi killed in his presence after horribly mutilating him.

On April 20, 1941, in the village of Svinjica, the Ustashi arrested the Orthodox priest, Father Babic, and after knifing him all over buried him, still alive, in an upright position.

Within a few weeks the Ustashi, encouraged by Catholic Padres, murdered 135 Orthodox priests, of whom eight-five came from one single Orthodox diocese.

Hundreds of Orthodox clergy perished thus only because they were priests of a religion which refused to join "the true Church."

In this photograph: two Orthodox priests hanged in public, without trial, by the Catholic Ustashi.

arresting 250 Orthodox peasants, among whom was Stevan Ivankovitch and the Orthodox priest, Bozin. Having led them all to a field, the Ustashi ordered them to dig their own graves; after which their hands were tied behind their backs and they were *pushed alive into their graves*. This feat created a commotion even among the Nazis, who set up a Committee charged with the specific task of exhuming the bodies and taking photographs as evidence. The "oral process" was incorporated in an official document of Nazi Germany, under the title of Ustachenwerk bet Bjelovar. In a

memorandum drafted by an officer sent to protect the Orthodox population of Eastern Bosnia during the terrible massacre of August, 1941, there was, among other things, the following:

During our journey towards the hill of Javor, near Srebrenica and Ozren, all the Serbian villages which we came across were wholly deserted. But inside the houses very often we find whole families massacred. We even came across some barrels filled with blood. In the villages between Vlasenica and Kladanj we discovered children who had been impaled upon stakes, their small members still distorted by pain, resembling insects stuck upon pins." [\[6\]](#)

In the town of Sisak the Ustashi arrested an Orthodox Serb industrialist, Milos Teslitch, well known for his kindness, and burned him alive. One of those most responsible for this crime was Catholic Ustashi Faget.[\[7\]](#)

To crown all these horrors, some Ustashi did not hesitate to crucify their victims. To mention only two: Luke Avramovitch, former member of Parliament, and his son, who were both crucified and then burnt in their own home in Mliniste, in the district of Glamoc.[\[8\]](#)

Such atrocities occurred with a frequency that shocked even the Ustashi's ideological allies: the Italian Fascists and the German Nazis. This to such an extent that on more than one occasion both the Italian and German authorities not only deprived the Ustashi of the command of whole regions, but actually ousted them altogether, replacing them with Italian or German troops, to prevent a repetition of the terrible individual and mass murders committed by Pavelic's Catholic units. It will suffice for us to mention two typical cases which led to such a replacement. On August 2, 1941, the Ustashi authorities of Vrgin-Most and of Cemernica announced that all Serbs who did not wish to be molested had better assemble on the following day at 3 a.m. in Vrgin-Most,



Mass executions, with the Ustashi, took sundry forms. Often they assembled the members of the village outside, and then shot the lot. Or they shut a whole congregation inside their church and then set fire to it. When in a hurry, however, they became experts at individual and mass hangings. Their expertise was a regular feature of their barefaced terrorization. This was particularly so during the last years of their regime.

Here are a few examples. On August 7, 1944, they hanged ten persons: on August 26 at Jablanac, near Zapresic, thirty-six people. On September 30th, between the stations of Pusca, Bistra and Luka, ten persons. On October 4, at St. Ivan, twenty-nine persons. On October 5, again at Zapresic, five persons. On October 6th, Cucerje, twenty persons. On October 9, at Velika Gorica, thirteen persons. On the same at Svetaa Nedjelja, near Samobor, eighteen persons. On December 28, at Krusljevo Selo, fifty persons.

Above, one of their last mass hangings, in Sarajevo, prior to the collapse of Ustashi Croatia in 1945.

where Catholic priests would be waiting to convert them to Catholicism. About 5,000 people followed this advice. Instead of Catholic priests, units of Ustashi, armed with machine guns, encircled the assembled crowd, who were held prisoners until the following day, when they were all massacred. Among them were thirty-seven children under ten years of age.[\[9\]](#)

Not long afterwards, on August 20, 1941, another unit of the Ustashi arrested all Serbs in the neighboring region of Lijevno, took them to the woods of Koprivnica, between Bugojno and Kupres, and killed them all. A few days later they arrested all the surviving families, whom they also massacred on the same spot. Before the massacre,

women and even young girls were raped, after which most of them had their breasts cut and arms and legs broken. Some old men, before being executed, were blinded by way of having their eyes cut with knives or torn from their sockets. [\[10\]](#)

Five hundred women and children were hurled into pits in the hills of Tusnica and Komasnica, while another eighty women and children were massacred in the village school of Celebic. The Italian Fascist authorities were so shocked by such incredible cruelty that, in addition to dispatching their troops to protect the surviving population and occupying the region of Lijevno and neighbouring places, they dispersed the Ustashi and sent a protest to Zagreb.

Ustashi were committing no less abominable atrocities in other parts of the country. In the town of Prijedor, for instance, during the night of July 31-August 1, 1941, they massacred 1,400 men, women, and children, leaving their corpses to rot in the houses and in the streets. The Nazis nearby, horrified at such wholesale butchery, entered the town, compelling the Ustashi to leave. The Nazis had records of massacres of their own second to none. Yet the horrors committed by Pavelic's Ustashi troops proved to be of such bestiality as to shock even them: a most crushing evidence that the Ustashi massacres had surpassed anything experienced even by the Germany of Hitler. The magnitude of the butchery can best be gauged by the fact that within the first three months, from April to June, 1941, 120,000 people perished thus. Proportionately to its duration and the smallness of the territory, it had been the greatest massacre to take place anywhere in the West prior to, during, or after that greatest of cataclysms, the Second World War.

Footnotes

1. For further atrocities, see *Memorandum on Crimes of Genocide Committed against the Serbian People by the Government of the Independent State of Croatia during World War II*, dated October, 1950, sent to the President of the 5th General Assembly of the United Nations by Adam Pribicevic, President of the Independent Democratic Party of Yugoslavia; Dr. Vladimir Belajcic, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Yugoslavia; and Dr. Branko Miljus, former Minister of Yugoslavia. [\[Back\]](#)

2. This event is described in his book, *The Concentration Camp at Jasenovac*, p. 282. See also above Memorandum. [\[Back\]](#)

3. The eyewitness, Bojislav Zivanic (father, Duko; brother, Bogoljub) from Dukovsko,

related these events under oath before a group of Serbs and Croats, among them Dr. Sekulich, General Mirkovic, and the author, at a meeting specially held on May 20, 1951 in London.[\[Back\]](#)

4. *Martyrdom of the Serbs*, p. 145, issued by the Serbian Eastern Orthodox Diocese for the U.S.A. and Canada.[\[Back\]](#)

5. Eyewitness: Pritova, Bihac, Bosna.[\[Back\]](#)

6. See *Dokamenti o Protunarodnom Radu i Zlocinima Jednog, Dijela Katolickog Klera, Zagreb*, 1946. Also above Memorandum to UNO.[\[Back\]](#)

7. *Assassins au Nom De Dieu*, Herve Lauriere, Paris, 1951.[\[Back\]](#)

8. See *Dokumenti o Protunarodnom Radu i Zlocinima Jednog Dijela Katolickog Klera, Zagreb*, 1946. Also file of Yugoslav State Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes.[\[Back\]](#)

9. Eyewitness: Stanko Sapitch, of Blakusa.[\[Back\]](#)

10. Evidence given by a survivor, Marija Bogunovitch.[\[Back\]](#)

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 6

"CHRIST AND THE USTASHI MARCH TOGETHER"

If the first ingredient of Ustashi super-nationalism was race, the second was religion. The two could hardly exist independently, having been so closely intertwined as to have become almost synonymous. The word Croat, in fact, signified Catholic, as much as, in Croatia, Catholic came to signify Croat. If this was useful to Ustashi racialism, it was no less beneficial to Catholicism, in so far as, once the theory had been established that Catholic meant Croat, the idea that Croatia had to be totally Catholic not only became firmly rooted: it was turned into one of the basic tenets of the new State.

The results of such an identification were portentous. For, while nationalism had embarked upon a policy of 100 per cent racialism, the Catholic Church had embarked upon an inevitable parallel policy of 100 per cent Catholicism. The two policies were in effect one single policy, the political authorities automatically furthering the religious interests of Catholicism, while the religious authorities furthered the political interests of Ustashi racialism.

The actual process of integrating the two into an inseparable organic, religio-political unit, not only was conducted by individual Catholics or Catholic organizations, like the Crusaders, or Catholic political leaders like Macek: it was promoted by the Catholic clergy prior to the birth of the Ustashi State. Catholic priests, in fact, vigorously preached Fascism before the Second World War. The Catholic Press, controlled by them, became Fascism's mightiest propaganda organ. In it they advocated the Fascist Corporate State, praised the Fascist Catholic dictators, and preached racial theories—e. g. the theory that the Croats were not of Slav descent, but were Gothic German. One of the founders of this race theory was a well-known Catholic priest, Kerubin Segvic, who as far back as 1931 wrote a book entitled, *The Gothic Descendance of the Croats*, with a view to creating racial odium against the Slavs, which was synonymous with "Orthodox." Fascist nations were hailed as glorious examples for the future Croatia. In its issue of April 3, 1938, for instance the Catholic daily, *Hrvatska Straza*, praised Fascist Hungary for "solving the social problem by accepting the main principle of the Christian Corporate State." The same paper, on March 2, 1938, greeted the Anschluss with: "Young Croatia for Anschluss."

The Catholic Press preached Catholic Nazism on the model of that planted in Slovakia

by the Catholic Nazi dictator priest, Mgr. Tiso. The *Zagreb Katolicki List*, the organ of Archbishop Stepinac, in January, 1940, carried an article entitled "Catholicism and Slovakian National Socialism," which read in part:

In a modern state, which placed the interests of the people above all other considerations, the Church and the State must cooperate in order to avoid all conflicts and misunderstandings. Thus, in accordance with the teachings of Christ, the Church in Slovakia had already exerted itself to arrange a new life for the Slovakian people. The views of Dr. Tuka are fulfilled by the formation of a 'people's Slovakia, which has the approval of the President of the Republic, Mgr. Dr. Josip Tiso. In the National-Socialist system in Slovakia, the Church will not be persecuted. Persecutions will be used against the opponents of National-Socialism.

The achievements of Catholic Fascism were continually glorified in Hungary, in France under Catholic Petain, in Spain under Catholic Franco. The chief Catholic daily, *Hrvatska Straza*, the editor of which, Dr. Janko Shimrak, became a bishop under Pavelic, openly and consistently praised Hitler's successes in domestic and foreign policy. In the issue of March 12, 1938, Hitler's occupation of Austria was defended and praised. Later this paper hailed Hitler's successes in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and France. The *Katolicki Tjednik*, organ of Catholic Action, published under the direction of the Archbishop of Sarajevo, Dr. Ivan Saric, printed articles entitled "A New Order Must Come" (e.g. in issue No. 4, 1941), before Hitler attacked Yugoslavia.

The Catholic Press, by propagating Nazi-Ustashi ideas, played a tremendous role in conditioning the people to what eventually happened, reaching as it did people in all walks of life. Its influence was great, and helped to an enormous extent to represent Pavelic and the Ustashi as having been sent by God to the Croatian people. It became especially skillful in sowing the seeds of religious hatred towards the Serbs, racial hatred towards the Jews, and hatred for Yugoslavia. Immediately after the proclamation of the Independent State of Croatia it placed itself unreservedly at the disposal of the Ustashi, thus following the example of the Catholic clergy, who took an active part in helping the Ustashi, with weapons in their hands, in the disruption of the Yugoslav Kingdom.

At many points Catholic priests, and even Catholic friars, helped to form treacherous Ustashi armed bands with the precise objective of attacking the Yugoslav Army from the rear. Many of these clerics boasted openly of their military activities. The exploits of others who fell in battle were recalled in their obituaries.

The Catholic weekly, *Nedelja*, in its issue of June 22, 1941, describes in an article entitled, "The Last Convulsion of Yugoslavia on the Island of Pag," the manner in which the priest on that island took part in disarming the Yugoslav Army:

Late at night younger Croatians would follow the development of events. The Reverend Stipanov in Vlasici on Pag would also listen to the news and ride to inform the officers and soldiers. Thus the news events found us prepared and enthusiastic. It was decided to disarm the officers from Serbia

The Ustashi paper, *Hrvatski Narod*, on July 4, 1941, hailed the Franciscan priest Dr. Radoslav Glavas as a great organizer of the Ustashi. The article said in part:

A young and energetic Franciscan, Dr. Radoslav Glavas, came to Siroki Greg and placed himself at the head of the struggle. A plan was even drawn to prevent the mobilization of the Yugoslav Army. Thus the historic day of April 10 was welcomed, and in the night between April 10 and 11 the Ustashi disarmed the local gendarmerie and captured the post office.

The Ustashi periodical, *Za Dom*, No. 1, of April, 1941, adds:

Another priest, joining forces with two customs guards, captured two generals and 40 officers, while a Franciscan brother, with the help of a number of youths, disarmed an entire Serbian company.

Hrvatski Narod, No. 251, of June 4, 1944, page 3, carried a death notice, written by priest Eugen Beluhan, of Chaplain Ivan Miletic, which in describing his Ustashi activities asserted: "As a priest he assisted in the disruption of the Yugoslav Army during the revolution." There is an endless list of such reports in the files of the War Crimes Commission.

Following the fall of Yugoslavia and the rise of the independent State of Croatia, the Catholic Press came all out for Pavelic and his Ustashi. *Vjesnik Pocasne Straze Srca Isusova* (The Courier of the Honourable Guards of Christ's Heart) contained, in issues Nos. 5 and 6, 1941, an article entitled, "The Banner of Croatia—the Heart of Christ," in which the "resurrection" of Croatia was compared to that of Christ:

In the early spring the Croatian people experienced their resurrection at the time of Christ's resurrection. The great son of the Croatian people returned and gave them their liberty and ancient rights. And this is also the work of God; the Lord did it all and that is why it is strange to our eyes.

Glasnik Biskupije Bosanske i Sremske (The Voice of the Bosnian and Srem Bishopricks), No. 13, of July 15, 1941, imitating Pope Pius XI, who had called Mussolini the man sent by Divine Providence, called Pavelic a man of Providence:

Holy is this year of the resurrection of the Independent State of Croatia.
The gallant image of our chieftain appeared in the rainbow. It can and it must be said of him that his is a man of Providence.

Glasnik Sv. Ante (The Voice of Saint Anthony), in its issue of December 12, 1941, went further, declaring that the birth of the Independent State of Croatia was God's work:

The Croatians, who are mostly a Catholic people, consider such a great historical event as some fortunate accident, or as a stroke of luck. No, this is the work of God and Providence.

Even this was not enough. The Ustashi were compared to no one else but Christ. Witness the voice of the Crusader movement, *Nedelja*, which, in its issue of June 6, 1941, in an article entitled, "Christ and Croatia," declared the following:

Christ and the Ustashi and Christ and the Croatians march together through history. From the first day of its existence the Ustashi movement has been fighting for the victory of Christ's principles, for the victory of justice, freedom, and truth. Our Holy Saviour will help us in the future as he has done until now, that is why the new Ustashi Croatia will be Christ's, ours and no one else's.

Catholic leaders, priests, and indeed bishops were given positions in the Ustashi State. Immediately after Pavelic assumed power many priests were appointed to local and provincial administrative posts in the newly created Ustashi State. To mention only a few: the Catholic priest Ante Klaric Tepelun, from the village of Tramosnica, district of Gradacac, who in April, 1941, became an Ustashi tabornik, and took part in disarming the Yugoslav Army. Father Emanuel Rajich, priest in Gornji Vakuf, who participated in disarming the Yugoslav Army, organized Ustashi rule in Gornji Vakuf, and was appointed Ustashi tabornik, in which capacity he organized the first Ustashi army unit in Gornji Vakuf.

Novi List, No. 54, in 1941, reported the appointment of priest Stjepan Lukic to the post of *logorni pobocnik* (camp adjutant) of the Zepce camp. Cecelja Martin, priest in Recica, District of Karlovac, was appointed to the post of Ustashi tabornik for the

county of Recica. Dr. Dragutin Kamber, priest in Doboj, was appointed in April, 1941, to the post of Ustashi commandant for the District of Doboj, with all political and civil powers thus concentrated in his hands.

No. 34 of the same paper, dated July I, 1941, carried an order of the Government appointing priest Didak Coric to the post of tabornik in Jaska; Ante Djuric, priest in the village of Divusa, to the post of *tobornik* for the district of Drvar; and priest Dragan Petranovic to the post of *logornik* in the camp of the district of Ogulin.

Catholic leaders directly under the orders of the Hierarchy were given the highest positions—e.g., the President of Crusaders, priest Dr. Felix Niedzielski, who was made Ustashi Vice-Governor of Bosnia during the first days of Pavelic regime. Another Catholic priest, Grga Peinovic, Director of the Crusaders, was made nothing less than President of the Ustashi Central Propaganda Office, as reported in *Fledelja* on August 10, 1941. In an article entitled, "Crusaders in the Independent State of Croatia," the same paper pointed to the fact that many persons trained in the Crusader organization were now occupying high offices, which was indeed true.



A collection of Catholic newspapers issued in Ustashi Croatia, all showing Pavelic's portrait.

The press, including the Diocesan and Episcopal papers, all supported and praised the Ustashi, from the first to the last.

Besides the propagation of Nazi-Ustashi ideas, the Catholic press played a tremendous role in conditioning the Croatian people to the horrors that were eventually to occur once Croatia came into being. It represented the Pavelic Regime as the instrument of justice and the vengeance of God. It became especially skillful in sowing religious hatred against the Orthodox Serbs.

The official organ of the Archbishopric of Zagreb, *Katolicki List*, No. 16, 1941, declared that Ustashi Croatia had been created by an all powerful Providence. So did *Glasnik St. Ante* (The Voice of St. Anthony), December 12, 1941: "This is the work of Cod." The paper *Nedelja*, June 6, 1941, the organ of the Catholic Crusader movement, declared "Christ and the Ustashi march together."

The active participation of so many Catholic leaders and Catholic clergy in the formation of the Ustashi State of Croatia had been possible only thanks to one thing: the consent of, and indeed instructions from, the leaders of the Catholic Hierarchy. This was proved from the very first by the incontrovertible fact that high and low clergy cooperated whole-heartedly with Pavelic. Catholic parishes, as well as Catholic Cathedrals, and, indeed, the very radio, were used as a political platform for Pavelic and the Ustashi. Witness Radio Zagreb, which on April 11, 1941, the day after Kvaternik and the German Army had entered the Croatian capital, instructed the people to welcome the German Army and "to seek answers to all questions from the Catholic parish offices, where instructions will be given about the future work."

The official organ of the Archbishopric of Zagreb, *Kato-licki List*, No. 16, 1941, declared that the independent State of Croatia had been created by an all-powerful Providence. The Catholic Church, it concluded, prayed God that the New Croatia should find its fulfillment. The same paper went farther, and soon afterwards published "The Principles of the Government of the Independent State of Croatia and of the Ustashi Movement," to acquaint its readers with the basic directives regulating the life of every individual in the new puppet State. These directives soon helped Pavelic to convert Croatia into a virtual concentration camp. Archbishop Stepinac, on April 28, 1941, issued a pastoral letter, in which he asked the clergy to respond without hesitation to his call that they take part in the exalted work of defending and improving the Independent State of Croatia, declaring that from then onwards in the "resurrected" Croatian State the Church would be able in complete freedom to preach "the invincible principles of eternal truth and justice." The pastoral letter, which was also published in *Nedelja* and *Katolicki List* on April 28, 1941, said the following:

Honourable brethren, there is not one among you who did not recently witness the most significant event in the life of the Croatian people among whom we act as herald of Christ's word. These are events that fulfilled the long-dreamed-of and desired ideal of our people.... You should, therefore, readily answer my call to do elevated work for the safeguarding and the

progress of the Independent State of Croatia.... Prove yourselves, honourable brethren, and fulfill now your duty toward the young Independent State of Croatia.

The pastoral letter was read in every Croatian parish. It was also read over the radio. The impression it had on the people, and especially on the clergy, was indicated by Father Peter Glavas, who, during his trial after liberation, said in his own defense: "The order given by Archbishop Stepinac to the people over the radio to fight for the Independent State of Croatia constituted a political directive to the clergy." Like any other priest, he had to obey.

The Ustashi section of the clergy, which had been active in terrorism even before the war, did not need this circular to tell them how to act. Yet many who until then had hesitated, after Stepinac's instructions accepted his directives and actively engaged in supporting the Ustashi. The Catholic clergy did not join the Ustashi merely to chant Latin hymns. They joined in order to carry out the Ustashi racial and religious terror programs.

When Pavelic returned from Italy to Zagreb, to assume leadership of the New Croatia, he stopped in the town of Ogulin, on April 13, 1941, where he conferred with one of his most fanatical lieutenants, the Ustashi Catholic priest Canon Ivan Mikan. On that same day, in a public speech, Canon Mikan foretold the shape of things to come: "There will be purges," shouted priest Mikan. "Yes, there will be purges." On the same evening, not far from that region, the first Ustashi punitive expedition attacked individual Serbs in several villages.

Were these massacres committed only by the followers of Pavelic? They were often promoted and carried out by Catholic priests claiming to be the followers of Christ and the representatives of a Church trumpeting to the four winds that she preached universal love. It will suffice for us to mention only a few. The first Ustashi commandant in the District of Udbina was the Franciscan priest, Mate Mogus, who had organized the Ustashi militia and disarmed Yugoslav troops. At a meeting in Udbina on June 13, 1941, he gave the following homily: "Look, people, at these 16 brave Ustashi, who have 16,000 bullets and who will kill 16,000 Serbs, after which we will divide among us in a brotherly manner the Mutilic and Krbava fields"—a speech which was the signal for the beginning of the slaughter of Serbs in the district of Udbina.

In Dvor na Uni, priest Anton Djuric kept a diary of his activities as an Ustashi functionary. The diary shows that on his orders the Ustashi plundered and burned the village of Segestin, where 150 Serbs were murdered, and that in the village of Goricka

he arrested 117 people, who were sent to a concentration camp, where most of them were killed.

A group of Franciscan priests, who tortured and finally killed twenty-five Serbs in the village of Kasle, took photographs of their victims. In the village of Tramosnica, priest Ante Klaric became the first Ustashi commissar, the personally led Ustashi units in attacks on Serbian villages. He organized the Ustashi militia and, according to witnesses, spoke from the pulpit as follows:"

You are old women and you should put on skirts, for you have not yet killed a single Serb. We have no weapons and no knives and we should forge them out of old scythes and sickles, so that you can cut the throats of Serbs whenever you see them.

Priest Bozo Simlesa, in the village of Listani, was one of the most active members of the Ustashi. He held the post of chief of the district of Livno. During the slaughter of the Serbs in the county of Listani he told the people from the pulpit that the time had arrived to exterminate all Serbs living in Croatia. He personally organized the Ustashi militia and obtained arms for them. On July 27, 1941, he held a meeting in the village, and when he was informed that all Serbian men had been murdered and that women and children were to be killed that night, he told them not to wait for the night, for twenty-four hours had already passed since the chief had issued his order that not a single Serb must be left alive in Croatia.

The Catholic Dean of Stolac, in Herzegovina, priest Marko Zovko, was responsible for the murder of 200 persons, whose bodies were thrown into a ditch in a field in Vidovo. Franciscan Mijo Cujic, of Duvno, personally gave instructions for the massacre of Serbs in the villages of Prisoje and Vrila, where not one person was allowed to remain alive. Were these the abominable deeds of some few individuals maddened by religious and racial fanaticism? Indeed they were not. They were an integral part of the official policy of the Catholic Church, which, screened behind the mantle of the Independent State, had inspired and promoted all the horrors which soaked the historical land of Croatia in a sea of blood.

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 7

CATHOLIC FRIARS, PRIESTS, EXECUTIONERS, BISHOPS AND MURDERERS

As Ustashi racialism had embarked upon a policy of Serbian extermination, it followed that its twin counterpart, Catholicism, could do no less than embark upon the extermination of its main religious foe: the Orthodox Church. State and Church, consequently, to implement their mutual scheme of total racial-religious exclusiveness, set out to pursue parallel policies, epitomized in the extermination of the racial elements, the Serbs, by the political authorities, and in that of the religious elements, the Orthodox, by the Catholic Hierarchy.

The Catholic Church did not leave the execution of a religious war to the secular arm, as she had done in similar circumstances in bygone centuries. She came down into the fighting field, full tilt, shunning precautions and brandishing the sword against those whom she had decided to exterminate, with a directness that had not been seen for a long time. Many of the Ustashi formations were officered by Catholic priests, and often by friars, who had taken an oath to fight with dagger and gun for the "triumph of Christ and Croatia." Many of them did not hesitate to carry out the most infamous tasks, glorying in deeds that would have filled with shame any average "heathen or barbarian from the East." All in the name of religion. Thus, while some, as we have already seen, took charge of concentration camps, others led the armed Ustashi in the closing of Orthodox churches, in the confiscation of Orthodox records, in the persecution, arrest, and, yes, even in the murder of Orthodox people, including Orthodox priests. At Banjaluka, for instance, an official order directed that all the Orthodox Church records of marriages, baptisms, and burials be delivered forthwith to Catholic parishes, while at Pakrac Catholic priests took possession of the Serbian Bishop's residence, following the locking and sealing of the Orthodox cathedral (April 12, 1941).

Orthodox churches were converted into halls—e.g. that of Prnjavor, on July 10, 1941. Others were transformed into Catholic churches, when they were not pulled down altogether—e.g. in the provinces of Lika, Banija, and Kordun, where 172 churches were totally destroyed. Orthodox monasteries shared the same fate. At Fruska Gora fifteen Serbian Orthodox monasteries and churches were given to Catholic monks of the Franciscan order, as was also done with the Church properties at Orahovica, Pakrac, Lepavina, and other places. The monastery of Vrdnik-Ravanica, wherein were buried

the remains of King Lazar, who led and died in the historical battle of Kosovo against the Turks in 1389 in defense of Christianity, was also taken over, as was Sremski Karlovci, the former seat of the Orthodox Patriarchate. There the great cathedral was first plundered of all valuables, then closed, after all its physical properties had been taken over by the Catholic Bishop. Within a short period 250 Orthodox churches were pillaged or destroyed. In the diocese of Diakovo, mentioned before, twenty-eight Orthodox churches became Catholic churches.

Together with the destruction of Orthodox churches, Catholic ferocity struck at the very backbone of the Orthodox Church: i.e. at the Orthodox clergy. Orthodox priests were imprisoned, sent to concentration camps, hunted down, or simply massacred. Hundreds of them, including Orthodox Bishops, perished, only because they were priests of the religion hostile to the "true Church."

Orthodox priests, before being executed or hanged, were often horribly tortured—e.g. priest Branko Dobrosavljevich, from Veljun, who was compelled to read the obituary of his own son, whom the Ustashi first killed in his presence, this preceding his own torture and death, which became the signal for the mass execution of hundreds of Orthodox inside the Orthodox churches of Kladusa, Veljun, Slusnica, Primislje, and other places. On April 20, 1941, in the village of Svinjica, the Ustashi arrested the Orthodox priest, Babic, and after torturing him buried him in an upright position to his waist in the ground. Within a few weeks the Ustashi and Catholic priests murdered 135 Orthodox priests, of whom eighty-five came from one diocese.

The higher clergy were not spared. On the night of June 5, 1941, on orders from the Ustashi chief, Gutic, the Orthodox Bishop Platon, of Banjaluka in Western Bosnia, together with several Orthodox priests, some of whom were former members of the House of Representatives, was taken to the outskirts of the town by the Ustashi. There the old Bishop's beard was torn out, a fire lit on his naked chest, then, after prolonged torture, he and all his companions were killed with hatchets, and their bodies thrown into the Vrbanja River.

Dositej, Orthodox Bishop of Zagreb, capital of the Independent State of Croatia, where Archbishop Stepinac had his residence, lost his reason as a result of the tortures inflicted upon him before his expulsion to Belgrade. Three Orthodox Bishops, Peter Zimonjic of Sarajevo, Sava Trlajic of Plaski, and Platon of Banjaluka, were murdered.

[1]

Numerous Catholic priests and monks, some of whom were not even attached to the Ustashi formations, carried out indiscriminate executions with their own hands. Many

of them methodically and with precision took part in the most incredible orgies of blood. Canon Ivan Mikan, already mentioned, made daily rounds of the prison and mercilessly beat Orthodox Serbs with a bull-whip, scolding the Ustashi for being lax in their work, personally ordering that the Orthodox monastery of Gomirje be looted and its inmates sent to a concentration camp, where they were all executed. Fra Anto, a Catholic priest of Tramosnjica, organized Ustashi bands with the object of capturing as many Orthodox Serbs as he could, whom very often he tortured personally, as he did at Brcko. Simic Vjekoslav, a monk of the monastery at Knin, personally killed numerous Orthodox. Sidonije Sole, a monk of the Franciscan monastery in Nasice, deported the Orthodox population of whole villages, while the Catholic priests Guncevic and Marjanovich Dragutin, in addition to acting as police officials, ordered the arrest of hundreds of Orthodox, whom they tortured and then killed, taking an active personal part in their execution.^[2] German Castimir, abbot of the monastery in Guntic personally directed the mass murder of the Orthodox Serbs of Glina, a hundred of whom were murdered inside the Orthodox church there. The names of many others have been put on record by the Serbian Eastern Orthodox diocese of the USA and Canada, by the Orthodox Church of Yugoslavia, by the Yugoslav Government, and by other official agencies.^[3]

The purpose of all this terror was to destroy the enemies of Catholicism. Yet, while the Catholic Church, whenever given total power, can become a ruthless destroyer of her enemies, bursting with dreams of expansion, she can simultaneously follow a no less ruthless campaign of absorption. Absorption can be accomplished by only one means: by conversion.

In the village of Mikleus, 1942, a Catholic parish priest "converting" in bulk hundreds of peasants.

Many Catholic priests were at the head of the Ustashi. Witness priest Mate Mogus, of the parish of Udbina, in the province of Like. "We Catholics," he told the to be forcibly converted Serbs, "until now have worked for Catholicism with the cross and with the book of the Mass. The day has come, however, to work with the revolver and with the gun."

Father D. Juric, a Franciscan, was appointed head of a Ministry charged with plans for the systematic conversion of all those Orthodox who had been spared from Concentration Camps or massacre.

Most of the forcible conversions were duly announced by diocesan

bulletins. Witness, *Katolicki List*, organ of the Bishopric of Zagreb, controlled by Archbishop Stepinac. In its issue No. 31, 1941, it reported that "a new parish of over 2,300 souls" had been created in the village of Budinci, as a result of the *entire village* having been re-christened to the Catholic Faith. Collective resistance was met by ruthless collective punishment.



"Converting" the Orthodox Serbs, December 21st, 1941, Friars, besides Priests, participated in forcible conversions. They were no less ruthless than the parish clergy, e.g. Monk Ambrozije Novak, Guardian of the Capucine Monastery in Varazdin, who, utter surrounding the village of Mostanica with Ustashi contingents, told the people: "You Serbs are condemned to death, and you can only escape that sentence by accepting Catholicism."

Catholic Padres did not hesitate to liquidate those who resisted. Witness Father Dr. Dragutin Kamber, a Jesuit priest and a sworn Ustashi, who ordered the killing of 300 Orthodox Serbs in Doboje and the court martial of 250 more, most of whom were shot. Or Father Dr. Branimir Zupanic, who had more than 400 people killed in one village alone: Ragoije. Father Srecko Peric, of the Gorica Monastery, near Livno, advocated mass murders with the following words: "Kill all Serbs. And when you finish come here, to the Church, and I will confess you and free you from sin." This resulted in a massacre, on August 10th, 1941, during which over 5,600 Orthodox Serbs in the district of Livno alone lost their lives.



A Franciscan monk converting Orthodox villagers in Mikleus, near Kutina.

On their murderous expeditions, the Ustashi were always accompanied by Catholic Padres—most of these themselves Ustashi officers—whose task was to supervise the operations and, above all, to ensure that the Orthodox Serbs were converted to the Catholic Church. Conversion meant the avoidance of arrest, loss of property and even of life.

Father Dionizio Juric, Ante Pavelic's confessor, was quite blunt about it. "Any Serb who refuses to become a Catholic should be condemned to death," he declared at Staza, in the district of Banjia.

With Catholic storm troopers nearby the threat was a reality. There were instances where those who refused conversion were executed on the spot. Witness the case of Father Ilja Tomas, of the village of Klepac, who promised safety to the fleeing Orthodox if they became Catholics. Because they changed their minds, however, the Ustashi murdered the lot.



The Orthodox churches became the main targets of the Catholic storm troopers, the Ustashi, and even of the Catholic clergy. These churches were seized, evacuated, closed, transformed into Catholic churches, or burned down altogether.

In the province of Lika, Banija and Kordum, in 1941, 172 Orthodox churches were totally destroyed.. At Fruska Gora, 15 Orthodox monasteries and churches were given to Franciscans. Out of 189 churches in the diocese of Gornjo Karlovachka, 175 were destroyed or burned down.

There were cases when the Ustashi, after having shut the Orthodox worshippers inside their church, set fire to the building. The worshippers were machine gunned when attempting to escape. Thousands perished in this way, killed by bullets, falling masonry, or burned alive.

In 1941 Glina witnessed such a spectacle. The photograph shows the remains of an Orthodox church burned there by the Ustashi with about 2,000 men, women and children who had gone to pray in it.



Catholic Brothers, and Monks, when visiting villages to "convert" the Orthodox population, were always escorted by the heavily armed Catholic storm troopers, the Ustashi.

The terrible reputation of the Ustashi for ruthlessness was often sufficient to "persuade" people to embrace the Catholic Church and their bayonets helped the Catholic Padres to baptize those who hesitated. The alternative, the preachers warned, was seizure of their property, arrest, concentration camps, or even execution.

Father Franjo Pipinic, the parish priest of Pozega, for instance, towards the end of 1941 converted thousands, "assisted" by the Ustashi Captain Peranovic. He always began and ended his sermons by explaining that "conversion" was the only way to stay alive. The sight of the grim, armed Ustashi nearby induced whole communities of Orthodox to embrace the "true" Church.

The Commission for Investigating War Crimes reported how hundreds of cases of such Catholic "persuasion" had occurred throughout Croatia. Above, Franciscan Padre, Bozidar Braie, is seen while delivering a sermon to the soon to be converted Orthodox congregation at Zemun, July 12, 1942, escorted by Ustashi. The large letter "U" on the open air pulpit stands for "Ustashi."



The Franciscan Monk, Father Miroslav Filipovic. Left as a priest, wearing his cassock. Right, in Ustashi uniform. Father Filipovic was the Commandant of the terrible concentration camp at Jasenovac.

Father Filipovic, chief ecclesiastical murderer of Croatia, although a Monk of the Order of St. Francis, was a fanatical Ustashi long before the Second World War. His political and religious ruthlessness can be judged by the fact that, while addressing a battalion of the armed Ustashi in the village of Drakulic, he killed an Orthodox child with his own hands.

Resenting the Orthodox reluctance to be "re-baptized," he told the armed Ustashi to "re-Christen these degenerates in the name of God. You follow my example." One thousand five hundred Orthodox Serbs were executed in one single day.

As Commandant of the Jasenovac Concentration Camp, Father Filipovic, aided by Father Zvonko Brekalo, Father Z. Lipovac, and Father Culina, caused the death of 40,000 men, women and children during the period of his administration.



The non-Catholic population in Catholic Croatia were given two basic alternatives: conversion or death. Their churches were closed, parish documents destroyed, ecclesiastical buildings burned down. Orthodox worshippers very often were arrested inside their own churches, and kept there or in local halls while awaiting their fate: i.e. forcible conversion, concentration camps or execution. Their survival, more often than not, depended upon the whim of the Ustashi Commandants of the Catholic Padres accompanying them.

There were occasions, however, when the Orthodox Serbs were given no chance at all to escape with their lives. Some Catholic Priests being implacable. Witness the Abbot of the Monastery in Guntic, Father German Castimir, who personally directed the mass murder of the Orthodox Serbs of Glina, a hundred of whom were massacred inside their Orthodox Church there.

In this photograph, Orthodox worshippers inside their church at Hrvatska Dubica, prior to their all being murdered, August 21, 1941.



Once inside the sundry concentration camps, the inmates were still liable, not only to be tortured, but to be executed as well. The camp Commandants had unwritten authorization to kill anyone taken there. Indeed, to quote Ljubo Milos, Commandant of the Jasenovac Concentration Camp, there was "an agreement" that all prisoners sentenced

to three years were to be "liquidated" at once.

By virtue of this, inmates at times were murdered indiscriminately without even the slightest legal excuse. Justification for mass killings was sometimes of the flimsiest nature.

For example, on September 15, 1941, all those inmates of the Jasenovac Camp unable to work, numbering between 600 and 700, were executed. In the Camp of Stara Gradiska, 1000 women were killed. In the Krapje Camp in October 1941, 4000 prisoners were murdered. To save themselves physical trouble, at times the Ustashi used typhus, e.g. in March 1943 the inmates of the Djakovo Camp were purposely infected with typhus, causing the death of 567 persons.

In the photograph, corpses of victims taken out of water wells at the Lepoglava Camp.



Bodies of Orthodox Serbs executed by the Ustashi contingents at Sinj on August 26, 1941.

The Ustashi perpetrated countless mass murders on the slightest pretext, it being the official policy of their Government to get rid of the Orthodox Serbian population in their midst, since Catholic Croatia must be inhabited ONLY by Catholics.

By virtue of such a principle, the Ustashi arrested, tortured and slaughtered their Orthodox prisoners without pity. This even when the prisoners had been designated to Concentration Camps. Witness the case of the 5,000 Orthodox prisoners who, in August 1942, having been assigned to the notorious Concentration Camp of Jasenovac, were decimated by the Ustashi en route. Two thousand of them were murdered in cold blood. Those who survived were transferred to Gradina, where on August

28,1942 they were all put to death by the Ustashi with the butts of their rifles and with hammers. The corpses were then buried in common graves or cremated in rudimentary ovens.



The Ustashi not only detained, arrested and "punished" people whom they considered hostile, they tortured and even executed them, regardless of any legal justification.

During their first years of indiscriminate power they carried out numberless executions. Single individuals or small groups were punished or massacred on the spot. Whole Orthodox families were wiped out. More often than not, the pleading victims were not spared, even when some of them, to save their lives, made ready to be "re-baptized" into the Catholic Church. Later on such willingness saved thousands on the advice of the Catholic padres, who accompanied the Ustashi contingents.

In 1945, however, when the fall of Independent Catholic Croatia loomed inevitable, the fleeing Ustashi resumed their ancient ruthlessness and massacred without any discrimination. When retreating from Sisak, for instance, they massacred the 380 prisoners of that camp in cold blood. The victims were then hurled into the river. This photo shows some of the corpses of those thus murdered on the banks of the Sava.



Another case of throat cutting, which took place in Croatia in 1943. The photograph was found in the pocket of a dead Ustashi. One of his companions is holding up the already severed head of a victim, for his friend to take a photo.

The Ustashi committed the most execrable crimes with the utmost indifference. Frequently they amused themselves with prolonging the tortures of their prisoners, to pass the time.

They did not spare women or children. To quote only one instance: In the villages between Vlasenica and Kladanj the Nazi occupational troops discovered children who had been impaled upon stakes by the Ustashi, their members still distorted with pain. Catholic priests, too, advocated the killing of children. Witness Father D. Juric. "Today it is no longer a sin to kill a child of seven," he said, "should such a child be opposed to our movement of the Ustashi."



Mass murders were supplemented by the massacre of individuals, mostly in rural districts. Instances of the utmost ferocity occurred. The Ustashi very often used the most primitive weapons, such as forks, spades, hammers and saws, to torture their victims prior to their execution. They broke their legs, pulled off their skin and beards, blinded them by cutting their eyes with knives and even tearing them from their sockets, as a survivor, Marija Bogunovitch, testified.

Sometimes executions were committed on the home ground of victims, carried out with conventional guns and revolvers. Some Ustashi specialized in disposing of their "charges" by crushing their skulls with hatchets or even hammers.

At Dubrovnick, Dalmatia, Fascist soldiers had photographs of an Ustashi

wearing two necklaces. One was a string of cut-out eyes, the other of torn out tongues of murdered Orthodox Serbs.

In this photograph Ustashi are torturing an Orthodox Serb with a saw prior to executing him. Somewhere in Bosnia, in 1943. The photograph was found in the pocket of a dead Ustashi in 1945.



Indiscriminate mass deportations and mass executions became one of the most characteristic features of the Ustashi. Very often the life or death of the prisoners depended upon the whims of the local Commander or even the local Catholic priest.

Ustashi authorities would summon the Orthodox Serbs to perform public works or to listen to some new law. Once they were gathered in a given place, they would be surrounded, marched outside the village or town, and executed without further ado.

In the most remote regions of Upper Dalmatia, like Bosnia Herzegovina, there took place such veritable extermination. Women and children were not spared.

Some detachments of Ustashi, with the idea of saving themselves the trouble of burying the bodies, shot their victims on bridges. In Brcko, for instance, the home town of Deafer Kulenovic, the Ustashi Prime Minister, the Orthodox prisoners were all executed on the local bridge and then immediately hurled into the river.

This photograph shows the bodies of people executed by the Ustashi and flung into the river Kupa, in May 1945.



The Archbishop of Sarajevo, Dr. I. Saric, giving the "Heil Hitler" with a group of Ustashi civilians and Nazi officers at the airport of Butmir, in 1943.

Archbishop Saric had been an Ustashi as early as 1934. He spoke, plotted and acted as the veritable Ustashi leader that he was. He exhorted his clergy to act as Ustashi and to "employ revolutionary methods to the service of truth (i.e. the Catholic Church), declaring that it was "unworthy of the disciples of Christ to think that the struggle...should be conducted... with gloves on."

Many Catholic priests, bishops and monks were sworn officers of the Ustashi, e.g. Father Ivan Miletic, who led guerrillas against the Central Government of Belgrade. Or Father Kadoslav Glavas, a Franciscan Monk, who on April 10 and 11, 1941, disarmed the local police and captured the Post Office. In Herzegovina, the centre of the Ustashi movement was a Franciscan monastery.



The Orthodox Church became one of the prime targets of Catholic Croatia, which, very often, used the German armies of occupation, outside Croatia, to round up obstinate Orthodox Serbs.

One of the most effective means of paralyzing any resistance of the

Serbian Orthodox Church was that of asking the Nazi authorities to arrest the Orthodox clergy. The policy was carried out throughout Yugoslavia. The result was that soon Orthodox resistance became very weak and, in fact, in certain parts of occupied Yugoslavia, even tacitly cooperated to avoid deportation and even execution. The policy was carried out everywhere. In this picture Dr. Gavriilo Dozitch, the Orthodox Patriarch is arrested by the (Gestapo, in the convent of Ostrog, in Montenegro. The Ustashi cooperated with the Nazis wherever they could harass, embarrass and destroy the Orthodox Church, which they considered the mortal enemy of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church has never believed in persuasion, which is used only when she cannot enjoy absolute power. Her actions have always been based on one of the most incontrovertible and typical Catholic dogmas: naked force. This, not only to smite, but also to convert. In Croatia she used force to do both, destruction and conversion having been, in all her wars of religion, two facets of the same grand strategy.

It was thus that, while demolishing Orthodox churches, while massacring Orthodox clergy and bishops, she was at the same time converting their congregations to Catholicism, using a "persuasion" behind which stood boycott, threats, force, and even death. Catholic priests became the natural leaders of this specialized operation, priests and monks competing to see who could convert most Orthodox to the "only true faith." The spirit in which the campaign was conducted can best be judged by a typical leaflet, issued in 1941, by the diocesan journal of Djakovo, which read:

The Lord Jesus Christ said that there shall be one pasture and one shepherd. Inhabitants of the Greek-Eastern faith, hear this friendly advice.... The Bishop of Djakovo has already received thousands of citizens in the Holy Catholic Church, and these citizens have received certificates of honesty from State authorities. Follow these brothers of yours, and report as soon as possible for re-Christening into the Catholic Church.

This was not a unique example of Catholic "persuasion" backed by the bayonet. Priests openly told Orthodox to become Catholics if they wished to avoid persecution, concentration camps, and extermination. Franjo Pipinic, priest of Pozega, for instance, carried out mass conversions of Serbs towards the end of 1941, with the assistance of the Ustashi Captain Peranovic, telling the Serbian people that acceptance of Catholicism was the only way in which they could save themselves from death in

concentration camps. In the files of the Commission for Investigating War Crimes there are hundreds of cases of this "persuasion," of which we quote only a few.

One of the most fanatical missionaries for conversion was priest Ante Djuric, in the district of Dvor. He ordered the slaughter, plunder, and burning of many villages, and sent hundreds of Serbs to the concentration camp in Kostajnica. He personally mutilated and killed Serbs from Bosanska Kostajnica. In his speeches he always emphasized that the Serbs in his district "have only three ways out: to accept the Catholic faith, to move out, or to be cleansed with the metal broom."

Priest Ambrozije Novak, Guardian of the Capucine monastery in Varazdin, in 1941 went to the village of Mostanica, accompanied by Ustashi, and ordered the Serbian people to assemble, telling them: "You Serbs are condemned to death, and you can only escape that sentence by accepting Catholicism."

Priest Mate Mogus, of the parish of Udbina, in the province of Lika, was even more explicit: Until now, my brothers," he preached in his church, "we (the Catholics) have worked for our Catholic religion with the cross and the book of Mass; the day, however, has now come to work with the revolver and the gun." Some, however, wanted to use guns to bring an abundant crop of forcible conversions on a far larger scale. The words of Father Petar Pajic, published in the organ of the Archbishop of Sarajevo, bear witness to that: [\[4\]](#)

Until now, God spoke through papal encyclicals...And? They closed their ears.... Now God has decided to use other methods. He will prepare missions. European missions. World missions. They will be upheld, not by priests, but by army commanders, led by Hitler. The sermons will be heard, with the help of cannons, machine guns, tanks and bombers. The language of these sermons will be international.

Such sentiments were shared by priests holding the most influential positions—e.g. Mgr. Dionizije Juric, one of the heads of the Ministry of Cults, and, more important still, the confessor of none other than Ante Pavelic himself. When in Staza, in the district of Banija, Father Juric put the matter of forcible conversions in a nutshell: Any Serb who refused to become Catholic should be condemned to death, he said, because "today it is no longer a sin to kill a child of seven, should such a child be opposed to our movement of the Ustashi."

The Ustashi had committed and were committing massacres beyond counting. Yet the devout Catholic Mile Budak, in an address at Karlovac on July 13, 1941, did not

hesitate to declare that "the movement of the Ustashi is based upon religion." Catholics who had any qualms about it could reassure themselves simply by examining the professions of many of the leaders of the Ustashi, a great proportion of whom were monks, priests, and even bishops—e.g. Dr. Ivan Saric, the Archbishop of Sarajevo, an Ustashi since 1934. This pillar of the Holy Catholic Church, as soon as Catholic terror descended upon Croatia, spoke and acted as the veritable Ustashi that he was, inciting his subordinate clergy to act as Ustashi, and indeed, "to employ revolutionary methods to the service of the truth, of justice and of honour"; words which he repeatedly printed in his *Katolicki Tjednik*, where he never tired of declaring that "it is unworthy of the disciples of Christ to think that the struggle against evil (sic) could be conducted in a noble manner and with gloves on." This in addition to writing poems to Pavelic, and inciting all Catholics to follow Pavelic's example and the example of the Ustashi.[\[5\]](#)

But if open refusal of conversion spelt death, acceptance of "the true faith," although very often an insurance of terrestrial life, was not always a guarantee of safety. The slightest reluctance on the part of the Orthodox individuals, any obvious indication that they were becoming Catholic as a means of saving themselves, very often aroused Catholic vengeance. Apart from that, there were times when the call to conversion became only an excuse for wholesale massacre.

Curate Ilija Tomas, from the village of Klepac, for instance, was responsible for the death of hundreds of Serbs in that district. In order more easily to capture frightened victims who were fleeing to the mountains, he promised that no harm would befall them if they would embrace the Catholic religion. When many, believing this, called on him, he turned them over to the Ustashi, who murdered them all. In the village of Stikade, in Lika, Catholic priest Morber, leader of the Ustashi, invited the Serbs to be converted to the Catholic religion. Because those who accepted his proposal to be converted showed some reluctance, the Ustashi surrounded and massacred them with rifles and hammers and threw their bodies into a ditch. When the bodies were dug up later it was established that many had been alive when buried.

Josip Orlic, priest in Sunja, an old sworn Ustashi, compelled the Serbs in his district to accept Catholicism by threatening them with concentration camps. A great majority of the Serbs there changed to Catholicism, in fear for their lives. But as many of those re-christened made it clear that they did so to save their lives, they were carried away to the Jasenovac concentration camp in May, 1942, where practically all of them were killed. Some priests and monks specialized in forced mass conversions. The Ustashi priest Dionizije Juric, the Franciscan and close friend to Pavelic whom we have already mentioned, was appointed to head this division, which devised a plan for the systematic conversion of those Serbs who had been spared from persecution and massacre.

The daily mass murders taking place before them became the most powerful weapon of mass persuasion. Many followed the "friendly advice" and were "converted." Conversions of individual and mass character became increasingly frequent. Most of these were duly announced in the Catholic Press. *Katolicki List*, organ of the Bishopric of Zagreb, controlled by Stepinac, in its issue No. 38 in 1941, for instance, reported that "a new parish of over 2,300 souls" had been created in the village of Budinci, as a result of the entire village having been re-christened to the Catholic Faith, and added that preparations for the re-christening had been made by a Franciscan from Nasice, Father Sidonije Solc. A similar mass conversion in the vicinity of Osijek, carried out by Father Peter Berkovic, was described in *Ustaska Velika Zupa*, No. 1372, of April 27, 1942:

His work covers the period from preparation of the members of the Eastern Orthodox Church for conversion to Catholicism until they were actually converted, and thus in the counties of Vocin, Cacinci, and Ceralije, he converted more than 6,000 persons.

An Ustashi administrator, Ante Djuric, priest of Divusa, forced all heads of families to assemble round their local teacher, bringing a 10 diners tax stamp, in order to write out petitions for conversion for themselves and their families. The alternative: forfeiture of their residences and posts. The curate of Ogulin, Canon Ivan Mikan, charged 180 diners for each forced conversion, so that in one Serb village along—Jasenak—he collected 80,000 diners.

A frank admission of how these mass conversions were made was given by *Nova Hrvatska*, an Ustashi paper, on February 25, 1942: "The re-Christening was carried out in a very solemn manner by the curate of Petrinja, Michael Razum. *An Ustashi company was present at this solemn occasion.*"

The re-christenings, as they were euphemistically labeled, were frequently celebrated with, in addition to water, blood. Priest Ivan Raguz had no inhibitions about it. He repeatedly urged the killing of all Serbs, including children, so that "even the seed of these beasts is not left." His worthy colleague, the curate Bozidar Brale, from Sarajevo, took part in Serbian liquidation with gun in hand, loudly postulating the "liquidation of the Serbs without compromise." The Spiritual Board of the Archbishop of Sarajevo was eventually to see Brale. As a culprit before an ecclesiastical tribunal? Far from it. As that Catholic body's President.

With the Catholic Hierarchy as the brains of such a policy of terror, with the ruthless armed Catholic bands at their disposal, the expected occurred. Individuals, whole

families, entire villages, and even small towns embraced Catholicism. Their official entry into the "true Church" usually took place during mass ceremonies performed by Ustashi priests, "watched" by armed units of Ustashi. Refusal, or even postponement, on the part of the prospective converts brought upon them immediate requisitioning of property, threats against themselves, their relatives, and their very lives.

Thousands embraced Catholicism in this manner. Following their "conversion," the new Catholics wound in a procession to the local Catholic Church, as a rule escorted by units of piously armed Ustashi, chanting about the happiness of having at last become the children of the true Church, and ending up with Te Deums and prayers for the Pope. As if this were not sufficient, the villages where Serbs had been re-christened had to send congratulatory telegrams to Stepinac. For the eager Archbishop had, as befitted a good shepherd, ordered that the news of any mass conversions performed in any parish throughout Croatia be sent directly to him. Telegrams bearing such happy tidings were printed in the Ustashi paper, *Nova Hrvatska*, as well as in Stepinac's own official Diocesan Journal, *Katolicki List*. In its issue of April 9, 1942, the former printed four such telegrams, all addressed to Stepinac. In these, the mass entries into the bosom of Mother Church were laconically and succinctly described. One, for example, read:

2,300 persons assembled in Slatinski Drenovac, from the villages of Drenovac, Pusina, Kraskovic, Prekorecan, Miljani and Gjursic, accepted today the protection of the Roman Catholic Church and send their profound greetings to their Head.

Thirty per cent of Orthodox Serbs in the New Croatia were converted to Catholicism within a remarkably short period. The use of fear of losing property, or even life, however, was still not sufficient for most members of the Catholic Hierarchy engaged on this type of proselytization, and whenever resistance was encountered, Catholic clergymen ordered and, in fact, themselves often carried out the execution of many Orthodox. When collective resistance was met, ruthless collective punishment was inflicted upon the reluctant Orthodox. More often than not that meant torture and even execution.

Instances of such priestly murderers are many. Suffice it to mention a few. For example, Father Dr. Dragutin Kamber, a sworn Ustashi, but also a Jesuit priest. Father Dragutin ordered the killing of about 300 Orthodox Serbs in Dobo, and the court martial of 250 others, most of whom were shot. Or Father Dr. Branimir Zupanic, who had more than 400 men, women, and children killed in one village alone, Ragolje, and who was a personal friend of Ante Pavelic. During one of his sermons in the church of Gorica, Father Srecko Peric, of the Gorica monastery near Livno, advocated mass

murders with the following words: "Kill all Serbs. First of all, kill my sister, who is married to a Serb, and then all Serbs. When you finish this work, come here to the Church and I will confess you and free you from sin." This resulted in a massacre, on August 10, 1941, during which over 5,600 Orthodox Serbs in the district of Livno alone lost their lives.

The chief ecclesiastic murderer, however, was neither a mere Catholic clergyman nor a fanatical Jesuit. He was no less than a member of the Order of meek St. Francis: Nliroslav Filipovic, an Ustashi since long before the war, and a Franciscan monk. Father Filipovic killed a child with his own hands in the village of Drakulic, while addressing a battalion of Ustashi: "Ustashi," was his curt brotherly exhortation, "I re-Christen these degenerates in the name of God. You follow my example." One thousand five hundred Orthodox Serbs were then executed on one single day. Jasenovac, an Ustashi concentration camp which equalled Dachau in horror, not long afterwards received a new Commandant: Father Filipovic. In his new role, Filipovic, cooperating with Father Zvonko Brekalo, Zvonko Lipovac, and Father Culina, caused the deaths of 40,000 men, women, and children in the camp during the period of his administrations. [\[6\]](#)

The losses inflicted by these frenzied attempts of the Catholics to destroy the Orthodox Church were immense. The material damage amounted to 7 milliard pre-war gold diners. Out of twenty-one Orthodox bishops in Yugoslavia, one was taken to internment in Italy, two were forcibly removed from their sees and sent to Serbia, one was imprisoned with Patriarch Gavrilko, and then sent to Dachau concentration camp, two were beaten and sent to Serbia, where they died shortly afterwards, two died in internment camps, and five were murdered in cold blood. [\[7\]](#) About 400 Orthodox priests were sent to concentration camps, while about 700 (one-quarter of the total number of Orthodox priests) were killed. One-quarter of monasteries and churches were completely destroyed, about half of the total number were damaged, an unknown number were transformed into Catholic churches or Catholic halls. Out of 189 churches in the Gornjo Karlovachka diocese, for instance, 175 were burned and destroyed. [\[8\]](#)

The greatest losses, however, were inflicted among the humble members of the Orthodox Church. In Pavelic's New Ustashi State, in fact, between April, 1941, and the spring of 1945, thanks to Ustashi units, Ustashi police, and concentration camps, at least 850,000 members of the Orthodox Church and citizens of Yugoslavia, including numerous Croats (plus 30,000 Jews and 40,000 Gypsies), perished thus. [\[9\]](#) Hundreds of Catholic priests and Catholic friars contributed, either directly or indirectly, to this colossal massacre.

To say that these were the deeds of individuals suffering from religious mania, or that these same individuals had discarded the most elementary rules of humanity, acting on their own initiative after scoring the admonitions of their Church and rebelling against her authority, is untrue. The Ustashi massacres, all the atrocities committed by either Catholic officials, priests, or monks, fell within a coolly calculated scheme for the total elimination of the Orthodox masses, actively or passively resisting their absorption into the Catholic fold. Indeed, it was the premeditated policy of the Catholic Hierarchy, acting on behalf of its true inspirer, the Vatican.

Footnotes

1. See *Memorandum on Crimes of Genocide Committed against the Serbian People by the Government of the Independent State of Croatia during World War II*, dated October, 1950, sent to the President of the 5th General Assembly of the United Nations by Adam Pribicevic, President of the Independent Democratic Party of Yugoslavia; Dr. Vladimir Belajcic, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Yugoslavia; and Dr. Branko Miljus, former Minister of Yugoslavia.[\[Back\]](#)
2. See also *Martyrdom of the Serbs*, p. 176.[\[Back\]](#)
3. For list of names of Catholic priests who personally committed such crimes, see *Martyrdom of the Serbs* (p. 176), prepared by the Serbian Eastern Orthodox Diocese, for the USA and Canada, Palandech's Press, Chicago, 1943. Archbishop Stepinac, had he been willing, could have punished them, with military sanctions, as their military vicar. It is sinisterly significant that the Vatican permitted Stepinac to become military vicar, in October, 1940, before Yugoslavia was invaded. See also *Tablet*, January 17, 1953.[\[Back\]](#)
4. *Katolicki Tjednik*, No. 35, August 31, 1941.[\[Back\]](#)
5. *Hrvatski Narod*, December 25, 1941; *Novi List*, November 10, 1942.[\[Back\]](#)
6. Filipovic was regarded as abnormal even by many of his Ustashi colleagues. All the cases just quoted are authenticated and can be found in the files of the Yugoslav State Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes.[\[Back\]](#)
7. Throughout Yugoslavia only six were left at their posts.[\[Back\]](#)

8. These losses include the whole of Yugoslavia. The largest proportion, however, were willfully caused by Catholics in Croatia (figures published in *Glasnik*, official paper of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchy, 1951).[\[Back\]](#)

9. These are official figures, reputedly on the conservative side. The Serbian Orthodox Patriarchy estimated the killings at 1,200,000.[\[Back\]](#)

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 8

THE TRUE INSPIRER, PROMOTER AND EXECUTOR OF THE RELIGIOUS MASSACRES: THE VATICAN

The most ruthless promoters of bloodshed throughout the ages have invariably been religious and political fanaticism. The history of man has proved this to have been true, not only in the past, but, more portentous still, now in the present. Ustashi Croatia is the most frightening instance of modern times. There the identification of Church with State, of civil with religious authority, of spiritual with military ruthlessness, was found to produce individuals who committed barbarities unimagined even by themselves. Cassocks and tonsures have never given moral strength to clergymen nor rendered them immune to human frailty, passion, or vice. The murdering Catholic priests in Croatia were the victims of primitive frenzy. As such, they should be judged more with pity than with execration. Can, however, the master minds in Zagreb and in Rome, calmly exploiting the blind emotionalism and even wickedness of their clerical subordinates, be acquitted from the condemnation which history has already passed on them? Their calculated promotion of the Ustashi terror cannot be either minimized, excused, or condoned. For the mass murders carried out by individuals appareled in clerical garb truly were instigated from the archiepiscopal palaces of the Catholic Hierarchy. That Hierarchy knew, nay, it approved and tacitly encouraged the sanguinary task. Not one single member of their clergy, while the Independent Kingdom of Croatia lasted, was ever called to account by them. Not a single priest was by them ever punished, suspended, or unfrocked. Archbishop Stepinac, or any Catholic Bishop, could have done that at any time, had he been willing, not only when dealing with the most flagrant crimes, but also with minor transgressions—e.g., clerical



A Catholic priest "converting" a whole village. As a rule this meant collective mass baptism, particularly when villages had been surrounded by Ustashi detachments. The Catholic padres often used shock tactics to speed up matters, e.g., Father Ante Djuric, of the District of Dvor, who always opened his sermons with the following preliminary:

The Orthodox of this district have only three ways out: to accept the Catholic faith, to move out (leaving behind them all their possessions), or to be cleansed with the metal broom....

The higher clergy were no less explicit. Witness Bishop Mgr. Aksamovitch, of Djakovo, who sent the following proclamation to all Orthodox Serbs in his diocese:

Up to now I have received into the fold of the Catholic Church several dozens of thousands of Orthodox. Follow the examples of these brothers of yours, send without delay your request for your prompt conversion to Catholicism. By being converted, you will be left in peace in your home....

For those who refused, or rebelled, the alternative was persecution, arrest, concentration camps, or even death.



The Ustashi, after raiding some Orthodox village, as a rule deported the

women and children, either to concentration camps or to the nearest convent, where the "heretics" were re-baptized. This task was carried out by "Caritas," a Catholic organization run by the Hierarchy.

Very often, however, women and children were massacred with the rest.

In the village of Susnjary, for instance, after killing most of the inhabitants, the Ustashi led away about twenty surviving children, whom they tied to the threshold of a barn, which was then set on fire. Most were burned alive. The few who survived, horribly scorched, were then killed. As testified by eye witness Gjordana Friendlender, the Ljubo Milos case.

On September 13, 1941, several youngsters were impaled. Girls had their breasts cut and their hands made to pass through them. Many died of starvation or disease in concentration camps ran by priests or monks. In this photograph, the surviving women and children of a raided village near Bosanska, Dudica, are being taken to a camp. (1941)

fomentation of racial and religious hatred by word of mouth, writing, or deeds. A Catholic priest may not write in the Press without episcopal approval. Canon Law is very specific on this matter. It decrees this: "Any priest who writes articles in daily papers or periodicals without permission of his own Bishop contravenes Canon 1386 of the Code of Canon Law." Yet what happened? Clerical incitements to hate, to convert by force, and to massacre appeared in the ordinary Press without the Bishops uttering a single word of reprimand. They were even printed in the very ecclesiastical Press of the Catholic Hierarchy. Indeed, many bishops became the open advocates of forcible conversion, as proved by Mgr. Aksamovic, Bishop of Drjakovo, who sent the following proclamation to all Orthodox Serbs in his diocese:

Up to now I have received into the fold of the Catholic Church several dozens of thousands of Orthodox. Follow the example of these brothers of yours, and send, without any more delay, your request for your prompt conversion to Catholicism. By being converted to the Catholic Church you will be left in peace in your homes...and you will have ensured the salvation and the immortality of your souls...

Some priests, to their credit, protested openly, declaring that such instructions did not harmonize with the spirit of Christian teaching. Their bishops brought pressure upon

them, to compel them to carry out the policy of forcible conversions. This was testified by none less than Bishop Aksamovic's chaplain, Dr. Djuka Maric, at a hearing before Yugoslav authorities:

I and my friend and colleague, Stjepan Bogutovac," said the chaplain, "were forced by our Bishop, Aksamovic, to go as missionaries to the Orthodox towns of Paucje and Cenkovo and to perform there the rituals of re-Christening all the inhabitants within a week's time."

The result was that, in the Bishopric of Djakovo, under the personal leadership of Bishop Aksamovic, there took place one of the biggest mass-conversions of Orthodox in the whole of Croatia.

The responsibility of the head of the Catholic Hierarchy is further demonstrated by the fact that he could have used disciplinary authority, in addition to having at his disposal canonical power. Stepinac, in fact, was not only the Chairman of the Bishops' Conference; he had supreme control over the writing of the entire Catholic Press as Chairman of Catholic Action. Had he been willing to do so, he could have silenced any member of his clergy preaching the extermination of non-Catholics. Further to that, Archbishop Stepinac was invested with civil power, which he could have used, being a fully fledged Member of Parliament. Such power he shared with other prelates, among them: Mgr. Aksamovic, Bishop of Djakovo; Father Irgolitch, of Farkasic; Father Ante Lonacir, of Senj; Father Stjepan Pavunitch, of Koprivnica; Father Juraj Mikan, of Ogulin; Father Matija Politch, of Bakar; Father Toma Severovitch, of Krizevci; Brother Boniface Sipitch, of Tucepa; Franjo Skrinjar, of Djelekovac; Stipe Vucetitch, of Ledenice.

With such authority Stepinac could easily control and direct all the Catholic clergy. Had he been met with open defiance, he could simply apply military sanctions. For Stepinac was not only the highest ecclesiastical authority in the land: he had been created Supreme Military Apostolic Vicar of the Ustashi Army at the beginning of 1942. All priests attached to the Ustashi units were directly under him, as military subordinates. And, as a rule, these were the ones who either incited the soldiers to commit crimes or committed them themselves.

That the Catholic Hierarchy were the veritable promoters of the campaign of forcible conversions is further demonstrated by the fact that forced membership of Catholicism was made legal by governmental decree on May 3, 1941, when the Ustashi Government published a "Law concerning the conversion from one religion to another." Additional measures on this matter followed. For instance, in June, 1941, the Ustashi Prime

Minster set up (decree No.11,689) an Office on Religious Affairs, in charge of "all matters pertaining to questions connected with the conversion of the members of the Eastern Orthodox Church." Did Stepinac or the Catholic Hierarchy protest at the decree? Far from it; they whole-heartedly supported the law. In fact, they saw to it that the Department had at its head a priest, that same intimate friend of Pavelic whom we have already encountered, Father Dionizije Juricev. This office came into being following the very private audience with Pius XII accorded to Pavelic a month earlier. And perhaps of even greater significance is the fact that on June 30, 1941, the Minister of Justice and of Religions sent an official letter to all Catholic bishops, in which the Ustashi Government confirmed what had already been agreed with Archbishop Stepinac—namely, the



The Bishops and Archbishops of Croatia gave full support to the Ustashi. Indeed, many of them were themselves Ustashi long before Ustashi Croatia came into being, e.g. Dr. Ivan Saric, the Archbishop of Sarajevo, who had been an Ustashi agitator since 1934. Or Mgr. Dionizije, one of the Heads of the Ministry of Cults, dealing with forcible conversions, who was Ante Pavelic's confessor.

Others became full fledged members of the Ustashi Parliament, e.g. Mgr. Aksamovic, Bishop of Djakovo. The Hierarchy were the inspirers of the forcible mass conversions. A Committee of Three dealing with them was composed of the Bishop of Senj, the Bishop of Krizevci, Dr. Simrak, and Archbishop Stepinac himself, working in conjunction with the Ustashi Minister of Justice.

The whole Hierarchy gave canonical sanction to forcible conversions, following a Bishops' Conference in Zagreb, November 17, 1941. Ante Pavelic's regime stood upon the Hierarchy's unqualified support.

Here, he is seen surrounded by the Croatian Bishops and Archbishops during one of their frequent conferences with him.



The Vatican was well informed of what was going on inside Ustashi Croatia. Not only because the Catholic Hierarchy sent the Pope regular reports, but because the Pope had his own personal representative there.

The duty of the Papal Legate was to send regular and accurate information on the exertions of the Catholic clergy and Bishops. Also on the political and military doings of the Ustashi Government and of its leaders.

Pope Pius XII's representative on the spot was the Papal Legate, Mgr. Marcone, who was accredited to the Ustashi Government and to Pavelic. Mgr. Marcone was minutely briefed on every aspect of the Catholic Hierarchy and the Ustashi collaborators. In fact, he was the spokesman, not only of the Croatian Hierarchy when reporting to the Vatican, but equally of Pius XII when reporting to Archbishop Stepinac and Pavelic.

Above, Mgr. Marcone, flanked by Archbishop Stepinac and Nazi-Ustashi officers, at a Ustashi Meeting.

pursuance of a policy of liquidation of all the most influential strata of the Orthodox population—this to be carried out through refusal to accept them into the Catholic Church. "It is the wish of the Government," said the circular, "that all the priests, teachers, and, in fact, all the intellectuals belonging to the Orthodox Church, in addition to businessmen, industrialists, and the rich peasants, must on no account be accepted into the Catholic Church. Only the poor Orthodox population must be converted."

The fanatical determination of the Catholic Hierarchy to destroy the Orthodox religion at its very roots is demonstrated by their cold-blooded attitude towards the surviving Orthodox children who, unlike their parents, had escaped extermination. All these children were placed in public homes directed by Catholic priests or Catholic sisters,

under the auspices of Caritas, the Catholic organization run by the Hierarchy. In many cases they were put in the care of private Catholic families. What was the real objective of such extraordinary Catholic compassion? The implanting into their "lost souls" of "the true faith," as a prerequisite for their bodies being saved. Their religious assimilation was speedy, ruthless, and efficient. Officially converted to Catholicism, re-baptized with Catholic names, growing up in Catholic surroundings, these children, under continuous relentless Catholic pressure quickly lost all contact with their original ethnic and religious group. The inevitable result was that they were soon absorbed into the Catholic fold. Their assimilation was so thorough that even after Pavelic's collapse it became impossible to trace most of them, documents relating to their origin often having been willfully destroyed. Fleeing Ustashi took a number of such children with them to their main country of refuge, the Argentine. Others were taken to Italy. The wholesale kidnapping of Orthodox children was a characteristic feature of the forcible conversion, through terror, of Orthodox adults.

The former Apostolic Administrator and Bishop of Krizevci, Dr. Simrak, like many of his episcopal colleagues, publicly promoted, discussed, and encouraged plans for the whole campaign, and published directives to his clergy in the official Bishopric News of Krizevci, No. 2, 1942. Part of the text reads as follows:

Directive regarding the conversion of the members of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Slavonia, Srijem and Bosnia.

Special offices and church committees must be created immediately for those to be converted.... Let every curate remember that these are historic days for our missions and we must under no circumstances let this opportunity pass.... Now we must show with our work what we have been talking about for centuries in theory. We have done very little until now because....we are afraid of complaints from the people. Every great work has someone opposing it. Our universal mission, the salvation of souls and the greatest glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, is involved in this issue. Our work is *legal* because it is in accord with official Vatican policy and with the directives of the saintly congregations of the Cardinals for the Eastern Church.[\[1\]](#)

If these extraordinary directives had been issued by one single bishop, or even by several bishops, their significance would have incriminated the Catholic Church beyond excuse. But when it is considered that the Bishop of Krizevci, far from acting on his own, was officially following the instructions promulgated by his own very Primate, then the gravity of such instructions assumes a meaning transcending the deeds of a

local Hierarchy and trespassing into fields affecting the most sacred principles of religious liberty of all men. The programme of forcible conversions was given canonic sanction after Stepinac had convened a Bishops' Conference in Zagreb on November 17, 1941—that is, the year before. From that date onward the entire Catholic Hierarchy adopted a programme which was officially followed until the fall of Pavelic. Indeed, the programme which gave hierarchical sanction to the policy of forcible conversions was further strengthened by the actual setting up of a Committee of Three. The task of the holy triumvirate? To promote the policy of the forcible conversions, in conjunction with the Ustashi Minister of Justice and Religion. The names of the Members of the Committee need no comment: the Bishop of Senj, the Apostolic Administrator, Dr. Janko Simrak, and the Archbishop of Zagreb, Mgr. Stepinac. Some of the revealing clauses of the decree read thus:

The Council of Croatian Bishops, at a conference held in Zagreb on the 17th day of December, 1941, upon deliberations in regard to the conversion of Serbians of Orthodox faith to Roman Catholicism, promulgates the following decree:



The Papal legate (in white), Archbishop Stepinac, Ante Pavelic (in Ustashi uniform) and his wife, at the opening of a home for children at Tuskanac.

Pope Pius XII's representative participated in most of the official and semi-official functions of Ustashi Croatia. He was an eyewitness to the promotion of Pavelic and to Stepinac's policies of terrorization and Catholicization of Croatia. He knew of the atrocities and horrors taking place. He watched the progress of the forcible conversions, was aware of the wholehearted participation of the clergy in the wholesale massacre of thousands of Orthodox Serbs. All these things he faithfully reported to Pope Pius XII. In addition, Croatian Bishops wrote dispatches on the Ustashi horrors to the Pope, e.g. Dr. Ujchich, Catholic Archbishop of Belgrade.

The purpose of Homes for Children was usually to re-baptize Orthodox

orphans and thus convert them to the Catholic Church.



Catholic Religious Orders gave total and continuous support to the Ustashi. Before the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (1941) their convents were hiding places for Ustashi terrorists, concealed Ustashi presses and were depositories of Ustashi subversive literature and even of hand grenades, guns and dynamite.

The Ustashi carried out their activities screened by the members of Religious Orders, male and female. Nuns prepared uniforms, emblems and medical equipment for Ustashi detachments.

Nuns looked after "poor little orphans," i.e. children whose parents had been murdered by the Ustashi, all of which children were re-baptized into the Catholic Church. In this manner thousands were converted to "the true faith." Hundreds of Catholic nuns became specialized in the "conversion" of the young.

In this photograph, Ante Pavelic is shown surrounded by Catholic nuns after one of his visits to a Catholic convent engaged upon the furtherance of the Ustashi Catholicization of Croatia.

1. Concerning the vital question of the conversion of those of Serbian Orthodox faith into Roman Catholicism, the Catholic Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, according to divine right and church canons, retains sole and exclusive jurisdiction in issuing necessary prescriptions for said purpose, consequently, any action from any other but ecclesiastical authority is excluded.
2. The Catholic Ecclesiastical Hierarchy has the exclusive right to nominate and appoint missionaries with the object of converting those of the Serbian Orthodox into the Catholic faith. Every missionary shall obtain permission for his spiritual work from the nearest local church authority...

3. It is necessary that for conversions to be achieved, a psychological basis should be created among the Serbian Orthodox followers. With this object in view they should be guaranteed not only *civil rights*, but in particular they should be granted the right of *personal freedom* and also the right *to hold property*.[\[2\]](#)

Thereupon the Conference of these holy men released a complementary resolution (No. 253). In this they explained in more detail how certain forcible conversions were to be carried out. Then a second committee, which was directly under the Conference of the Catholic bishops, was set up, with the task of putting into practice the policy of forcible conversions. The list of its five members is significant: Dr. Franjo Hermann, Professor of the Theological Faculty of Zagreb; Dr. Augustin Juretitch, Adviser to the Conference of the Catholic Bishops; Dr. Janko Kalaj, Professor of Religious Education; Dr. Krunoslav Draganovitch, Professor of the Theological Faculty of Zagreb; and Mgr. Nikola Boritch, director of the Administration of the Archbishopric of Zagreb.

When examined without the frills and obscurities of their official phraseology, the various directives issued by these Hierarchical bodies turn out to be but faithful copies of similar instructions repeatedly given for centuries throughout the Christendom of the darkest Middle Ages. For that is what in reality they are. That a Catholic Hierarchy should have been permitted to re-issue them in the middle of the twentieth century is certainly one of the most sinister social phenomena of a civilization in swift decay.

The revival of a policy of forcible conversion assumes an even more portentous significance when one remembers that it occurred with the tacit approval of the Vatican. Had the Vatican disapproved, not a single priest could have taken part in the massacres or forcible conversions. A village priest can act only with the approval of minor Hierarchs who themselves cannot move without the permission of their Bishop, while the Bishop, in his turn, must act according to the instructions of his Archbishop; the Archbishop only on those of the Primate; the Primate on the direct instructions of the Vatican. The Vatican is the personal dominion of the Pope. The Pope being the central pivot of the vast Hierarchical machinery, it follows that the ultimate responsibility for all members of the clergy—or, to be more precise, for the collective action of any given national Hierarchy—rests with him. This cannot be otherwise. For policies of great import must be submitted to him before their promotion by all Hierarchies the world over, the Pope being their sole authority. If the responsibility for the monstrous persecutions rests with the head of the National Hierarchy—i.e. Stepinac—it has automatically to rest also with the Head of the Universal Church, without whose consent the Catholic Hierarchy would not have dared to act—i.e. with Pius XII.

Pius XII could not plead ignorance of what was going on in Croatia by bringing

forward the excuse of the obstacles of war. Communication between Rome and Croatia was as easy and as free as in peace-time. From the very beginning of hostilities the Nazi Ambassador at the Vatican was treated as of far greater importance than all the Allied diplomats. In 1940-2 the Vatican was on the most cordial terms with Hitler. Political and religious Ustashi leaders came and went between Rome and Zagreb as freely as did the Germans and Italians, the Ustashi State then being a satellite of Nazi Germany, and hence a province of the Nazi Empire. Moreover, the Pope knew what was happening in Croatia, not only through the Hierarchical administrative machinery, which kept him up to date on all Croatian events, but also through other reliable sources. They were:

(a) The Papal Legate. Pius XII, it should never be forgotten, had a personal representative in Croatia, whose task was to implement Vatican policy and coordinate it with that of Pavelic, as well as reporting on religious and political matters to the Pope himself. The Papal Legate to Croatia was Mgr. Marcone, who openly blessed the Ustashi, publicly gave the Fascist salute, and encouraged Catholics (e.g. when he went to Mostar) to be "faithful to the Holy See, which had helped that same people for centuries against *Eastern barbarism*"—that is to say, against the Orthodox Church and the Serbs. Thus, the Pope's official representative openly instigated religious persecution, as well as praying for victory "under the leadership of the Head of the State,

Pavelic," against the Yugoslav National Liberation Army in 1944-5.

(b) Cardinal Tiseran, head of the Holy Congregation of Eastern Churches. This congregation's specific task was to deal with Eastern Churches. Cardinal Tiseran received detailed reports of every forcible conversion and massacre in Croatia. Between April and June, 1941, over 100,000 Orthodox Serbs were massacred; yet Cardinal Tiseran, on July 17, 1941, had the audacity to declare that Archbishop Stepinac would now do a great work for the development of Catholicism in "the Independent State of Croatia...where there are such great hopes for the conversion of those who are not of the true faith."

(c) Ante Pavelic, who, by his representative to the Vatican, through whom Pius XII sent "special blessing to the Leader (Pavelic)," forwarded regular reports, at times straight from the Minister of Religions, about the "rapid" progress of the Catholicization of the New Croatia.

(d) Last but not least, Archbishop Stepinac himself, who in person visited Pius XII twice, and who supplied His Holiness with figures of the forcible conversions. In an official document, dated as late as May 8, 1944, His Eminence Archbishop Stepinac, head of the Catholic Hierarchy, in fact, informed the Holy Father that to date "244,000

Orthodox Serbs" had been "converted to the Church of God." [3]



Monks and Friars were the backbone of the policy of forcible conversions. Many participated in acts of terrorism. E.g. Simic Vjeckoslav, a Monk of the monastery at Knin, who killed dozens of Orthodox with his own hands. Sidoniie Solo, another Monk of the Franciscan monastery in Nasice, deported the Orthodox population of whole villages. The Abbot of the monastery of Gunlic, Father G. Castimir, directed the massacre of hundreds of Orthodox at Glina.

Father Dr. Dragutin Kamber, a Jesuit, ordered the killing of about 300 Orthodox in Doboj, and the court martial of 250 others, most of whom were shot.

Father Srecko Peric, of the Gorica monastery, on August 1st, 1941, personally incited the massacre of more than 5,600 Orthodox in the district of Livno.

Friars were Ustashi officers. Others Commandants of Concentration Camps. Above, Ante Pavelic during one of his periodical visits to Franciscan monasteries.



A band of Ustashi robbing the Orthodox Serbs of their possessions before shooting them. This picture was taken near Mount Kozara, in 1942.

The Ustashi, prior to executing their prisoners, very often mutilated and tortured. When dealing with Orthodox churches, they kept all the valuables to themselves or shared them with the Catholic Padres. The latter not only accepted the "gifts" but transferred to the Catholic Church the property of the Orthodox parishes. Such property included the baptism registers and all other official and semi-official documents.

Catholic padres and the Ustashi asked for money also as a condition for saving the lives of those they converted, e.g. the Catholic priest of Ogulin, Canon Ivan Mikan, who charged 180 diners for each forced conversion. In the Orthodox village of Jasenak alone he collected 80,000 diners.

Catholic Monasteries became gorged with Orthodox valuables and goods. Many of these were sent to the Catholic Bishops.

Footnotes

1. *Glasnik krizevacke nadbiskupije*, No. 2, 1942. [\[Back\]](#)

2. Other clauses of the decree:

3. Such missionaries shall be responsible only to the local church authorities or directly to the local Catholic priests.

4. The Roman Catholic Church will recognize as binding only those conversions which have been made in accordance with these dogmatic principles.

5. Secular authorities shall have no right to annul conversions made by the Church representatives.

6. The Croatian Catholic Bishops constitute a directorium consisting of three persons...they are authorized to consult with the Minister of Religion on all questions relating to necessary and proper procedure....

9. Concerning the rites to be applied in the conversions, the Croatian Roman Catholic Bishops will adopt in full the rule prescribed by the Holy Congregation of the Eastern Church as of July, 1941, and which has been communicated to the President of the Bishops' Council....

10. The Committee of the Croatian Catholic Bishops for conversions will organize courses for those priests who are to act as instruments in the conversions of the Serbian Orthodox into the Catholic Church. In these courses they will receive both theoretical and practical instructions for their work. [\[Back\]](#)

3. The authenticity of his reply was personally confirmed by Dr. Grizogono's son, Dr. N. Grizogono, a practicing Catholic. For further details, see *Ally Betrayed*, by David Martin, 1946. Archbishop Stepinac wrote to Pavelic about the conversion—more than once. See Mgr. Stepinac's long letter to Pavelic on the conversions, first translated and published by Hubert Butler.[\[Back\]](#)

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 9

CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN OF DENIAL, SMEAR AND FALSIFICATION

Rumours of the forcible conversions of the Ustashi massacres began to leak out of the Independent Catholic State of Croatia from its earliest stage. At first they received hardly any credence. That people should be killed for their religion could not be accepted in the middle of the 20th Century.

Yet the tales of individual witnesses, when added to the stories of Italian Fascist troops and even Nazi ones, could not be ignored forever. In view also of the fact that many described the Croatian horrors in their letters home, some having even taken "snaps" of the deeds.

When, finally, these could no longer be denied, counterrumors began to circulate to the effect that they were anti-Catholic propaganda, anti-Croat lies. Indeed, even "Gestapo-cooked" inventions. The Croats and their Catholic supporters accused the Nazis, the Communists, the Serbs, and even the Allies, in turn, of having started the atrocity stories.

Since evidence, however, went on accumulating, they were finally compelled to adopt three well defined tactics, which they carried out with simultaneous consistency: (a) the prevention of the arrival of fresh news; (b) the playing down or minimization, and even denial, of what had already become known; and (c) a smear campaign against all and sundry engaged upon telling about events in Croatia.

The intrigues, lies, plots and utter falsification directed to these ends became a grand strategy in themselves. We shall content ourselves with a few characteristic examples, since each is typical of the methods adopted from the very beginning.

In 1941 Dr. Milosh Sekulich, then in Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia, was charged with a mission of a military, political and ecclesiastical nature: to take certain important documents to the Allied Headquarters in London. Those who sent him: General Mihailovich, leader of the Chetnik forces, and the Bishops of the Orthodox Church of Serbia.

Having accepted, he undertook the perilous journey, left Yugoslavia and successfully

reached Istanbul, Turkey on 27th September, 1941. The exiled Yugoslav Government in London, having been informed of Dr. Sekulich's task, proposed on 6th October, 1941, on the initiative of their Premier, General Simovich, that the trip to London be financed by the Government. In view of the importance of the Doctor's mission, the Premier's motion was unanimously accepted.

Assured of the blessing of the Yugoslav Government, Dr. Sekulich then proceeded to Egypt. From Egypt he went to the Sudan, from there to the Congo, and finally to Lagos. It must be remembered that at this period the Fascist and Nazi armies were in control of North Africa and of the Mediterranean. Once in Lagos, however, he had to stop. The funds had been cut short. What had happened?

A Minister of the Yugoslav Government in charge of Finances, a devout Catholic Croat, had withdrawn the necessary money.

Unable to proceed further, Dr. Sekulich, with his documents, would have to remain in deepest Africa for "the duration." The evidence of the forcible conversions and Catholic massacres in this manner would never reach the Allies. Or, at least, would be greatly delayed.

The Croat's plan almost succeeded. But for the generosity of a Czechoslovak, the Manager of Bata in Lagos.

Dr. Sekulich brought to London two important documents: one hidden in the sole of his shoes and the other sewn into the lining of his suit. (A) A map of Mihailovich's Chetnik Headquarters, (B) two Appeals by the Serbian Orthodox Church, sent first to General Schroeder, Commander-in-Chief of the Nazi occupational forces in Serbia and then to General Dunkelman, who had replaced General Schroeder. In these two appeals, the Serbian Orthodox Church asked the Nazi Generals to intervene with Ante Pavelic to stop the massacre of the Serbs. The documents began as follows:

"The persecutions of the Orthodox Serbs started from the very beginning of the existence of the Independent State of Croatia... Following the departure of the German and Italian occupying troops (in 1941) persecution, plunder, torture of the Serbs, which until then had been checked, turned into a veritable program, directed at a *complete extermination* of the Orthodox Serbian people. Catholic Croatian Minister, Dr. Lile Budak, Dr. Milovan Zanic, Dr. Mirko Puk, and the Ustashi leader Dr. Victor Gutic competed against each other to incite the Croatians against the Orthodox Serbs.

"As a result of such policy, thousands of Serbs were taken to concentration camps,

Orthodox priests and their families were arrested, the birth, marriages and deaths registers of the Orthodox Church were handed over to the Catholic diocesan authorities, Orthodox Churches were destroyed, monasteries plundered, and the Serbian people forced to abandon their Orthodox religion and adopt Catholicism. We are sorry to have to relate that in all these misdeeds, the Catholic clergy also participated....

"We estimate that, so far (August 8th, 1941), the number of people killed surpasses 180,000....

"One of the first victims of Ustashi terror was Platon, Bishop of Banjaluka, together with the Orthodox Canon Dusan Subotich, of Bosanska Gradishka. They were murdered on the night of 5th-6th June, 1941, on the road between Banjaluka and Kotor Varos. Their bodies were thrown into the river Vrbanja....

"Canon Branko Dobosavljevic, of Vljuna district of Slunj, who was ordered by the Ustashi to dig the grave of his own son, a student.... In the end he, too, was tortured and killed on the same spot. Their killer: Ustashi Ivan Scheifer, a teacher....

"The Orthodox priest, Djordje Bogic, of Nasice, killed 18th June, 1941. Priest Bogic was tied to a tree and tortured. They first cut off his ears, nose and tongue, then pulled off his beard together with the skin. He died only after they ripped open his chest....

"Dusan Brankovic, a Member of Parliament, had his throat cut on 19th June, 1941....

"Dr. Veljko Torbica, who, before being killed near Gracica had his flesh cut into slices and salt put into his wounds....

"Milos Teslitch, a manufacturer of Sisak. His body was washed ashore from the river Sava with his eyes stubbed out, flesh cut off his face, and his whole body covered with knife slashes... The Ustashi photographed themselves with this disfigured body...."The Metropolitan of Zagreb, Dositej, Bishop Nikolaj of Mostar



On the left, Bogdanovic, executed by the Communists, beside Disan Brancovic. Brancovic, a Member of Parliament, was executed without even the presence of legality. Prior to his murder, the Ustashi amused themselves by slashing his chest with knives and ultimately scooped his eyes from their sockets. He was a close friend of Dr. Milos Sekulich (third from left), the man whom the Orthodox Church of Serbia charged with taking their appeals and documentation of the Ustashi atrocities to the Allies in London.

The Ustashi tortured and executed Members of Parliament, including Orthodox clergy and Bishops. Very often they seized their relatives, whom they sent to concentration camps or forced to become Catholics.

The Ustashi persecuted Orthodox personalities even after the collapse of Hitler and of Ustashi Croatia. Going so far even as to terrorize their fellow Croatians abroad by extorting "contributions" from them for the cause and by planting bombs in homes and public places, e.g., West Germany in 1964, Australia in 1965, and the USA in 1967.



One of the most horrifying documents of Ustashi brutality, Milos Teslitch, an Orthodox Serb industrialist, after having been burned in the town of Sisak. One Ustashi is holding the heart of the victim. The photograph was taken as a souvenir by an Ustashi who took part in the execution. Mainly responsible for this notorious crime was Catholic Faget.

The Ustashi did not hesitate to crucify their victims, e.g. Luka Avramovitch, former Member of Parliament, and his son, who were both crucified and then burned in their own home in Mliniste, in the district of Glamoc.

On the 20th August 1941 the Ustashi took all Orthodox Serbs to the woods of Koprivnica, between Bugojeo and Kupres, and killed the lot. Before the massacre, women had their breasts cut, arms and legs broken. Some men were blinded by way of having their eyes cut with knives.

During the night of 31st July/ 1st August 1941, in the town of Prijedor, the Ustashi massacred 1,400 people. The Nazis were so horrified that they occupied the town and compelled the Ustashi to leave.

and Bishop Sava Trlajic of Plasko, with many of their priests, were all deported... Today there are no longer any Orthodox priests in Croatia, except for those arrested. To realize the seriousness of these measures, it should be remembered that there are eight Orthodox Dioceses in the Independent State of Croatia, with a large number of clergy, all of whom are now missing... In this manner the Serbian people are entirely without their spiritual leaders, left to the mercy of the Ustashi and of the Catholic clergy...."

The Appeals thereupon gave numerous accounts of the crimes committed until then by the Ustashi, some of which we have already examined. Faced by such circumstantial evidence, Catholic propagandists then engaged upon a campaign of vituperation and distortion. They began by saying that Dr. Sekulich was a Gestapo Agent. This, although as soon as he arrived in London Dr. Sekulich had been received by Mr. Leopold Amery, Minister of State for India and right-hand man of Winston Churchill, then British Premier.

At the same time they asserted that the "atrocities stories" were lies. Sava Kosanovich, Yugoslav Minister, declared from the USA "This is the work of Nazi and Fascist propaganda... to which some people have lent themselves as naive accomplices." (November 1941).

Others affirmed that only the Ustashi had committed the crimes. "I repudiate all attempts to associate the Croatian people with Pavelic and his Ustashi," said Catholic Croat Dr. Subavich, Governor of Croatia in exile, "or to accuse them of the massacres which are going on...if they are going on, " he ended. (15th November 1941).

In spite of denials and distortions, the fact remained that the Croatian atrocities had occurred. And no one knew about their authenticity better than the members of the Yugoslav Government. Should they lend their authoritative voice to the Appeals of the Serbian Orthodox Church?

There followed a serious crisis. Croat and Slovene members, all Catholics, threatened the Government with an irreparable split.

At this time it must not be forgotten that the paramount concern of the exiled Government was to remain united. That is, to keep together the three main nationalities—Serbs, Croats and Slovenes—which formed Yugoslavia, and so prevent the disintegration of the Kingdom, while at the same time offering a united front against Hitler.

To avoid a major split, the Government finally decided NOT to publish the news of the massacres. Indeed, to remain silent, and even to deny altogether that they had occurred.

Notwithstanding this decision, however, the news soon leaked out. *The News Chronicle* published an article about them (3rd January 1942), "180,000 die in Serb Terror. Mass murders of men, women and children are described by the Archbishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church in a document which has reached the Yugoslav Legation in London. It is the most ghastly record of bestiality yet compiled during the present war.... In the village of Korito, the Archbishops records, 163 peasants were tortured, tied into bundles of three and thrown into a pit. Some were found still alive, so the Ustashi threw in bombs to finish them off..."

"...266 bodies are consigned to this pit. Subsequently petrol was poured into it and set alight. More than 600 people were killed in and around Krupa between July 25th and 30th. Most of them had been cut to pieces with knives, axes and scythes. In one place, four Orthodox Serbs were crucified on the doors of their houses, tortured and finally killed with knives," reported the *Daily Telegraph* (3rd January 1942). "It is suggested that the names (of the criminals) should go before an international court of justice to be set up after the war..."

The Press releases created a sensation. There were protests on both sides of the Atlantic, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Catholics set in motion a by-focal campaign of minimization and defamation. One of its most successful promoters was an American Catholic left-winger, of Slovene origin, Louis Adamic. Adamic set out to prove to the American people that the massacres were not true. Or that, if true, they had been rigged. And, last but not least, that the "Chetnik Courier," as he labeled Dr.

Sekulich, was a Nazi Agent.

Since Adamic's tactics were universally adopted during and after the war, it might be instructive to glance at them. According to him: "the atrocities were all propaganda...to stir up anti-Catholicism..." However, to give the impression of "impartiality," Adamic eventually explained, in a book entitled *My Native Land*, how he dealt with the issue.

"What could we do," he wrote, referring to the news of the Croatian horrors. "There just might be some basis for these horrible stories... (note his reluctant admission).... None of our little group in New York could get into occupied Yugoslavia to investigate the facts. The nearest we could get was London.

"The following resume includes facts learned and corroborated," he continued. "Large scale massacres of Serbians in Croatia occurred. But," he commented, "the total number of victims was not anywhere near 180,000 (the lowest figure previously reported). Reliable estimates from inside Yugoslavia were TENS OF THOUSANDS ONLY.

"Secondly, "the massacres were not perpetrated by the Croatian people, but by the Ustashi."

Thirdly, "Yes, Catholic priests converted the Orthodox," Adamic admitted, but "Catholic priests in Croatia accompanied Ustashi murder squads and 'converted' thousands of Orthodox Serbians to Catholicism under the threat of death from Ustashi guns, *much as the Spanish padres accompanying the conquistadors 'converted' the Central and South American Indians.*"

Adamic could not deny the existence of photographs. But no one should believe them, he commented. Here are his words:

Photographs of the massacres existed. I saw them. Some were horrible beyond utterance. There were pictures of vast piles of bodies, of stacked up heads, tubfulls of necklaces of human eyes... But only a few looked authentic...it was clear that most of them were arranged by Gestapo photographers. In two or three pictures, men in the garb of Catholic priests were among Ustashi.

After which Adamic drew his own conclusion:

ALL OR MOST of the pictures," he said, "were taken by Gestapo agents, who turned them over to Serbian Orthodox clergymen... The Orthodox priests reacted just as the

Gestapo had expected... They must get this information to the Yugoslav Government in London... The Gestapo helped to arrange this. A Serbian messenger, Dr. Sekulich, got out of Axis-occupied Yugoslavia with a German and a Quisling passport...and gave the photographs, the report of a puppet bishop, and other documents - all Gestapo approved - to the Yugoslav diplomatic officials in Istanbul. The material was then rushed to London by the same courier, Sekulich... British authorities arrested him...as a Nazi Agent...but he was released on the insistence of the Yugoslav Government's inner clique.... "The inner clique," continued Adamic, "relayed the Gestapo information about the massacres by diplomatic pouch to Fotich in Washington and elsewhere... It also submitted the story to the Bishop (sic) of Canterbury, who reacted just as the clique, and Hitler, desired...." and so on.

Adamic's tactics were too good to be ignored. He was the Catholic spearhead of another Catholic master truth-distorter who was to plague the USA a decade later, Senator Joseph McCarthy. As with Senator McCarthy, so also with Adamic the ponderous Catholic machinery was set in motion to promote the Adamic line.

The Catholic and Catholic-controlled Press and Radio of the U.S.A. and Allied Governments followed suit. Result: the atrocities were minimized, their genuineness questioned when not attributed to anti-Catholic propaganda, and finally they were forgotten. Had the Adamic lobby been confined to that, it would have been bad enough. But it succeeded in preventing the truth from reaching quarters with sufficient authority to prevent the prolongation of the situation, e.g. the President of the USA. For Adamic and his supporters had, indeed, managed to get the ear of President Roosevelt himself.

The insidiousness of the Adamic technique can be judged by the fact that Adamic was eventually to give account to Dr. Sekulich in court. Another wrongly accused victim: Winston Churchill. Adamic's book, *Dinner at the White House*, (to quote the Law Report, January 15th, 1947, High Court of Justice) "purported to be a description of a dinner party given at the White House by the late President Roosevelt, at which Mr. Winston Churchill, then Prime Minister, and the author were present. With this dinner as the starting point, the book proceeded to a criticism of both Mr. Churchill personally . . . and of his actions and supposed policy in relation to the war..."

In this book Mr. Adamic insinuated that "the motives of the British Policy in Greece were at least partly linked to the fact that Hambro's Bank of London, the chief British creditors of Greece (getting up to 17 per cent on their loans) had bailed Winston Churchill out of bankruptcy in 1912...." A grosser libel upon a public man holding the high position which Mr. Churchill held is difficult to conceive... But the reflection made upon his solvency is as nothing to the suggestion that in his capacity of Prime Minister

he had allowed his private feelings and his private interests to sway and influence the policy and conduct of public affairs by the Government of which he was the head, and especially in regard to operations of war in which blood was shed." [\[1\]](#)

Churchill, like Sekulich, issued a writ for libel action. Four years later, in 1951, Mr. Adamic was shot dead in Milford, USA. The reality of the Catholic massacres and forcible conversions remained hazy to many people: not only because of their incredible nature, but also because of the Catholic lobby. The present author himself for some years remained skeptical about them. Used as he was to the saturation technique of war propaganda (being, at that time, employed in the Intelligence and Political Warfare of the Allies' war machine), even after meeting Dr. Sekulich he accepted the Croatian atrocities with skepticism. It took some years before finally he became convinced of their veracity. During this time he contacted Yugoslavs of all classes. From General Mirkovich, the man who caused the overthrow of the Yugoslav Government when the latter signed a pact with Hitler and thus brought his country into the Allies' camp (1941) to the humblest manual worker.

Not content with this, the author personally interrogated numerous Orthodox Serbs, and even Catholic Croats, who had been eyewitnesses of the Ustashi massacres. Indeed, he even met victims who had escaped them. In addition to which, on the 20th May 1951, Dr. Sekulich, General Mirkovich and he held a special meeting in London. This was attended by victims of the Ustashi residing in England, from whom further documentation was received. All authenticated with names, dates and places. A typical case was that related by a survivor of the Ustashi, Vojislav Zivanic (father, Duko; brother, Bogoljub), from Dukovsko, before witnesses and under oath, which we have already mentioned elsewhere. In June 1943 an Ustashi contingent, passing through the village of Zijimet, rounded up seventy-four villagers, put them into a shed, and set this on fire. Among the victims were the aunt of the eyewitness and her two children. This man lost twenty-five members of his family, all burned alive.

The author of this book was not the only doubter of the Croatian nightmare. Thousands of others shared his skepticism. The result of the insidious Catholic brainwashing propaganda, promoted by Catholics who had adopted Adamic's techniques. An early victim was an illustrious personage who, because of her status and that of her husband, gave added significance to the damage which the Catholic Adamic falsifications of history worked in responsible places. Not long after Mr. Winston Churchill took Adamic to Court (1947), the present author, at a private dinner party in Upper Brook Street, Mayfair, London, met Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of the late American President. Since, at this period, the author was engaged upon his inquiries concerning the authenticity of the Ustashi, he asked Mrs. Roosevelt whether she had ever heard of

them.

One of the worst, if not the worse, crimes of the war, was her prompt reply. I heard of them in the winter of 1941-2. Neither I nor my husband at first believed them to be true.

"I did not believe them either," the present author commented. I assumed them to be propaganda."

We thought the same, replied Mrs. Roosevelt. "The Catholic lobby was the most successful at the White House for years."

Had she ever heard of an American author, L. Adamic? She had. One of the many who had persuaded her husband that the atrocity stories from Croatia had been concocted by the Nazi propaganda machine. Could she explain why these Catholic atrocities were not as well known as the Nazi ones? Nazi Germany is no more," replied Mrs. Roosevelt. "The Catholic Church is still here with us. More powerful than ever. With her own Press and the World Press at her bidding. Anything published about the atrocities in the future will not be believed...." The present author thereupon told her he was writing a book about them. "Your book might convince a few," she commented. "But what about the hundreds of millions already brainwashed by Catholic propaganda?" A few years later, in 1953, when the book was eventually published, although two editions were sold within weeks, no part of the British or American Press dared even to mention it.

The Yugoslav Government bought a few thousand copies, which were distributed free to the members of the House of Commons and House of Lords. Apart from a massive silence from both Houses, the only comments to reach the author were "utter nonsense," "rubbish" and "things of the past." And "even if true, why revive them now?" Mrs. Roosevelt had been right.[\[2\]](#)

During 1942, however, news of the massacres finally reached the outside world. And while the majority of Catholics denied or minimized them, not a few condemned them, e.g. Dr. Ivan Chok, a Catholic Slovene, who on 15th March 1942 ended a broadcast by saying "the long arm of justice will surely reach the guilty ones, to punish them mercilessly." Another Slovene, Dr. Kuhar, a Catholic priest, in the *Catholic Herald*, 20th February 1942, and in the *Catholic Times*, 22nd February 1942, repudiated the Croatian methods of forcible conversion. "We as Catholics...have the right and have the duty to condemn with all our might any conversion to our faith by force," he wrote. Dr. Vilder, a Croat and a Catholic, during a broadcast condemned not only the atrocities but also those who tacitly encouraged them. "Orthodox people are being forcibly converted

to Catholicism, and yet we do not hear one single word of protest from Archbishop Stepinac," he said (16th March 1942). Another Catholic Croat, Mr. Jerich, who escaped from Yugoslavia, issued a declaration jointly with a Dalmatian Croat, Mate Ruskovich (23rd July 1943): "We protest against mass massacre and forced Catholicization of Serbian Orthodox population...."

Catholics and non-Catholics alike not only protested, but addressed themselves to the Catholic authorities, both in Croatia and in Rome. Their protests, however, fell upon deaf ears. While Archbishop Stepinac and Pope Pius XII went on giving ever more frequent thanks to a merciful God for the increasing number of forcible conversions, additional protesting voices began to be heard with mounting insistence within and without Croatia. The sneers of those who at first had regarded the news as a crude form of anti-Catholic propaganda, as reliable information began to leak out ceased and gave way, first to astonishment and then to horror. Appeals were made to Stepinac, the Pope and the Allies from all over Europe. Not only from Serbs, who had every reason for letting the world know, but also from Catholics, who could not accept such a bloody degradation of their religion. Some lodged horrified protests with Archbishop Stepinac, and, indeed, direct with the Vatican. Perhaps one of the most outstanding was that written by Prvislav Grizogono.

Grizogono was a Minister of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, a Croat, and a devout Catholic. Yet nothing could more eloquently indict his Church than his letter, the words of which were most carefully considered and scrupulously weighed:"

Your Grace: I write this to you as man to man, as a Christian to a Christian. Since the first day of the Independent Croatian State the Serbs have been massacred (in Gospich, Gudovac, Bos. Krajina, etc.) and this massacring has continued to this day.

He follows with a detailed enumeration of some of the crimes perpetrated. After which he concludes:"

Why do I write this to you? Here is why: In all these unprecedented crimes, worse than pagan our Catholic Church has also participated in two ways. First, a large number of priests, clerics, friars and organized Catholic youth actively participated in all these crimes, but more terrible even Catholic priests became camp and group commanders, and as such ordered or tolerated the horrible tortures, murders and massacres of a baptized people. None of this could have been done without the permission of their Bishops, and if it was done, they should have been brought to the Ecclesiastical

Court and unfrocked. Since this did not happen, then ostensibly the Bishops gave their consent by acquiescence at least. The Catholic Church has used all means to Catholicize forcibly the remaining Serbs... The province of Stem is covered with the leaflets of Bishop Aksamovitch, printed in his own printing shop at Djakovo. He calls upon the Serbs, through these leaflets, to save their lives and property, recommending the Catholic faith to them.' What will happen to us Croats if the impression is formed that we participated in all these crimes to the finish? Again it is the duty of the Church to raise its voice: first because it is a Church of Christ; second because it is powerful. I write to you this, about such terrible crimes, to save my soul, and I leave it to you to find a way to save yours.

Signed, Prvislav Grizogono, former Minister of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. At Zemun, February 8, 1941.

Not content with that, Dr. Grizogono dispatched another letter to the Catholic Archbishop of Belgrade, Dr. Ujchich, who seemed sympathetic to his request. In it the Catholic former Minister of Yugoslavia begged the Archbishop to ask the Pope to order the Catholic Hierarchy to stop the mounting Ustashi terror by the prompt enforcement of ecclesiastical discipline and, if necessary the use of papal authority. Did the Archbishop of Belgrade state that the persecutions were pure fabrications or, at least, were grossly exaggerated? The Archbishop denied nothing. In fact, by his reply he confirmed their authenticity. Indeed, he disclosed that he was fully conversant with what was then happening. Here is what he wrote to Dr. Grizogono:

I thank you for your letter. The information about the massacres we have already received from many different sources. I have forwarded everything to the Vatican, and I believe that everything possible will be done. [\[3\]](#)

The outcries of the civilized world echoed as vainly in the halls of the Catholic Hierarchy as in those of the Vatican. The saintly Pope and the worthy Archbishop were mute. Their silence cost the lives of 850,000 men, women and children, the bloodiest religious massacre of the century. *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*—Such evil deeds could religion inspire.

Footnotes

1. *The Times*, London, January 16, 1947, *Law Report*, January 15, 1947, High Court of

Justice.[\[Back\]](#)

2. *Terror over Yugoslavia*, Watts, London, 1953.[\[Back\]](#)

3. The authenticity of his reply was personally confirmed by Dr. Grizogono's son, Dr. N. Grizogono, a practicing Catholic. For further details, see *Ally Betrayed*, by David Martin, 1946. Archbishop Stepinac wrote to Pavelich about the conversions—More than once. See Mgr. Stepinac's long letter to Pavelich on the conversions, first translated and published by Hubert Butler.[\[Back\]](#)

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 10

THE POPE, STEPINAC AND PAVELIC TRY TO SAVE CROATIA

As in the darkest Middle Ages, so also now the Catholic Church firmly believes that the ruthless brandishing of the Catholic sword is the surest way of saving the souls of men. This, not so much to confer on them eternal bliss, as to further the Church militant—that is, her expanding dominion on earth. Archbishop Stepinac and Pope Pius XII, therefore, let the terror in sealed Croatia take its course to the very end. Indeed, far from ever attempting to curtail it, they kept it alive, until the Kingdom tumbled with the fall of Fascism.

And yet before the echoes of the dictators ceased to be heard the Vatican suddenly appeared by the side of the victors, in a stealthy attempt to save moribund Fascism wherever it could.

Following consultations with Rome, Archbishop Stepinac and Ante Pavelic set in motion a joint plan to prevent their model State from crumbling as Fascist Europe was doing all around them. This consisted of:

- (a) preventing the Yugoslav Government from scattering the Ustashi armies;
- (b) persuading the Allies to occupy Yugoslavia, so as to prevent the Central Government from taking over the Independent Catholic State of Croatia.

The two set out with desperate determination to implement their new policy, sustained by the belief that the Vatican would use its influence among the big Powers to save them. While waiting, however, they began to reorganize the Ustashi armies, with the specific objectives of (a) preventing the collapse of Ustashi Croatia, and (b) of resisting and possibly destroying the new Central Yugoslav Government.

To the latter, such stubborn hostility was of the utmost seriousness, as at that period it was busily engaged in cleansing the country of resisting pockets of Nazi troops. The fight it had simultaneously to maintain against the Ustashi bands, therefore, put a considerable additional strain on the new Central Government. This was rendered even graver by the fact that in the international sphere Yugoslavia was considered a pawn for the already quarreling victorious great Powers, each of which was ready to negotiate

with anyone, in or outside that country, to advance its own projects.

Stepinac and Pavelic did all they could to see that Yugoslavia might be occupied by the "right" Allies—that is to say, by those willing to strike a deal with the Vatican for continued "independence" of Croatia. The true nature of their exertions can best be gauged if it is remembered that since 1941 Yugoslavia had been one of the Allies herself. Stepinac and Pavelic approached the Supreme Allied Command for the Mediterranean, and duly submitted a memorandum, openly outlining their policy: indeed, asking specifically for a prompt Allied occupation of the whole country. Anglo-American armies should be dispatched with speed, they said. Ustashi troops would welcome them, and more would join them. The "right" Allies must not lose another day. Civil war had broken out all over Yugoslavia. They must intervene.

Having invoked the guns of the "right" Allies, the good Archbishop set out to use the spiritual guns of the Church. On March, 24, 1945, he summoned his own bishops to a conference. Result: the blatant use of the spiritual authority of the Church for the promotion of political and military designs. Stepinac, backed by most of the bishops, issued a pastoral letter. After duly praising Ante Pavelic, their lordships attacked the Yugoslav National Liberation movement with all the pious venom of which they were capable. Thereupon they ordered all Croats to help the Ustashi bands to fight the Yugoslav troops. Only thus they thought would Ustashi Croatia survive.

As the situation worsened it became necessary to take another step. Following hasty consultations with the Vatican shortly before the total disintegration, Ante Pavelic asked a trusted friend to take hold of the reins of Ustashi Government. His name? Archbishop Stepinac.^[1] It was a shrewd move. A last desperate attempt to unite the Ustashi State into a truly compact unit. Stepinac—or rather the Vatican, which had inspired it—had fancied that, once the spiritual, political, and military forces of the State were centralized in the head of the Catholic Hierarchy, the Archbishop's authority would delay the disintegration of the State—indeed, by strengthening its fabric, might even prevent its collapse, and thus enable Vatican diplomacy in the meantime to exert its growing pressure on certain Allies, until these consented to save the Ustashi State from obliteration.

The move neither stopped the swiftly advancing Yugoslav Army nor saved from total collapse the fast-tumbling European Fascism. The Ustashi State had been doomed long before Stepinac tried to save it. In a losing battle to prevent its inevitable fate, Pavelic and his bloody bands, months before, had unloosed such a reign of terror as almost to surpass the previous ferocity. People were hanged, executed, or liquidated as hostages on the slightest suspicion.

To take the city of Zagreb and its immediate environs, in the course of only seven months (From August, 1944, to February, 1945) 379 hostages were publicly hanged. On August 7, 1944, between the villages of Precec and Ostrono, ten persons were hanged; on August 26, at Jablanac, near Zapresic, thirty-six persons; on September 30, on the railway between the stations of Pusca Bistra and Luka, ten persons; on October 4, at St. Ivan, twenty-nine persons; on October 5, again at Zapresic, five persons; on October 6, at Cucerje, twenty persons; on October 9, at Velika Gorica, thirteen persons; on October 28, at Djurinac, twenty persons; on the same day at Sveta Nedjelja, near Samobor, eighteen persons; on December 1, at Brezovica, ten persons; on December 20, at Odra, thirteen persons; on December 28, at Krusljevo Selo, fifty persons; on January 4, 1945, at Zitnjak, twenty-five persons; on January 25, at Konscina, forty persons; on February 3, again at Zitnjak, ten persons; on February 10, at Remetinac, thirty persons; on February 13, at Vrapce, twenty persons; on February 22, again at Vrapce, another twenty persons.

Notwithstanding all this, the end approached fast. Within a few days, Zagreb, the Croatian capital, was liberated. The Ustashi tried to save what they could. At the end of April, 1945, Pavelic, with the full consent of Stepinac, ordered the burial, in the Franciscan monastery in Zagreb Cathedral city, the Capitol, of thirty-six chests of plundered gold and valuables—rings, jewelry, gold watches, gold dentures, gold fillings which had been wrenched from the jaws of victims whom the Ustashi had massacred—and about two truckloads of silver. Then, when the collapse was complete, having entrusted to the care of Stepinac himself their most important documents, [\[2\]](#) the Ustashi ran for their lives. Some were executed. Many escaped. Pavelic fled to Austria, where he was made a prisoner by the American forces near Salzburg. While preparations for his official trial were well on their way, a "mysterious intervention" stopped the proceedings. Why! Pavelic was released unconditionally. Pius XII, through Stepinac and the Archbishop of Salzburg, had seen to it that his protégé did not suffer the fate of many other war criminals who were hanged. Pavelic, rendered immune by the powerful papal protection, traveled to Italy and found it in the Vatican City, where he waited for easier times.

After a while, to avoid scandal, the Pope, now a pillar of the victorious democracies, required Pavelic to quit Rome. Pavelic went from one monastery to another in monkish disguise under various aliases, Father Benares, or Father Gomez.

Meanwhile in Croatia—Stepinac, in accord with the Holy Father, continued his ominous preparations for war. The Ustashi, instead of disbanding, became guerrillas. They were, as in olden times, to fight in the hills and woods of "occupied Croatia."

Their new enemy: the Central Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, which had replaced the Yugoslav kingdom. Their new terrorist activities were to be cloaked again in innocent-sounding religious organizations. The old name of "The Crusaders" was adopted. After clandestinely meeting with the Ustashi Chief of Police in September, 1945, Stepinac summoned another Bishops' Conference in Zagreb. Once more their Graces, claiming to be men of peace, incited to war. In a pastoral letter they asked the people in so many unctuous words to rise and overthrow the Government.

Before such battle orders were issued, a flag, a symbol of the great holy army of the Ustashi, was consecrated to the Ustashi Crusaders' forces. Where did the ceremony take place? In Stepinac's chapel. On November 8, 1945, the good Archbishop received an agent who brought from Salzburg the "Pledge of Ustashi intellectuals"—to fight the Yugoslav Government till the end "for the liberation of the Croatian people."

The pledges of the surviving Ustashi, the activities of Archbishop Stepinac, were no shadow of resistance, but concrete and real. Stepinac employed dangerous, ruthless individuals. To cite only one, the former Ustashi Chief of Police. This individual launched a programme of sabotage and of assassination of the officials of the New Yugoslav Republic, with the Archbishop's approval. Stepinac furthermore established contact with the scattered armed bands of the Ustashi, directing priests and monks to act as liaison with them. These holy men traveled all over the country, keeping the illegal Crusader groups in communication with one another. They zealously reported their position, strength, and equipment to Stepinac in Zagreb. The Archiepiscopal Headquarters saw to it that such reports reached the Vatican, which, as a genuine champion of all democracies, forwarded them to the USA.[\[3\]](#)

The chain—Ustashi, Stepinac, Vatican, USA—was not merely a clandestine news agency. It was something more: a bait to induce certain Allied forces to promote a timely military intervention against Yugoslavia. For, indeed, Stepinac and his illegal bands based their hope of ultimate success upon that. The Vatican, far from counseling moderation, encouraged the Ustashi resistance, and added continual fuel to their burning hopes with repeated assurances of forthcoming military intervention. The Allies would come to their help. They must hold on, as the international situation was bound to change in their favour. The Western Powers were going to turn against their recent ally, Soviet Russia. A war of liberation was in preparation. Once that had begun, Yugoslavia would be wiped out, and Ustashi Croatia would spring again to the fore. The Ustashi guerrillas talked of nothing else. Stepinac saw to it that their expectations were maintained at the highest level, lest their enthusiasm change to despair, and thus cause the total collapse of organized military resistance.

To this effect, the prestige and authority of religion were once more unscrupulously employed. "The Fathers"—that is, the various Catholic padres whom the Archbishopric of Zagreb had duly attached to the illegal terroristic Ustashi bands—went from hideout to hideout, encouraging the impatient Ustashi troops to endure a little longer. The British and Americans were just coming. But they must be patient, as, naturally, to plan a good military expedition took time. The assurances of the Catholic padres were repeated day in and day out, until they became a refrain for the Ustashi loops, expecting "the day" as, simultaneously, their day of deliverance and the new birthday of a more glorious Ustashi Croatia. This was not merely the conviction of the underground Ustashi formations or that of the priests. It was that of Stepinac himself, sure that once the Allies intervened, the Ustashi would be given help by the peasants, who "one day will rise." [4]

The Archbishop, however, was not content only with wiping out Yugoslavia as a political unit in order to ensure the resurgence of a new Catholic Croatia. He was allured by visions of superb grandeur—nothing less than that an Allied intervention would be a stepping-stone leading them to Belgrade and, then, to Moscow. The issue, according to conservative forecasting, rested on conventional military weapons. Stepinac, however, although a Catholic Archbishop, was a man of progressive ideas. He believed in the power of scientific achievements, such as the recently discovered atomic energy. The atom bombs dropped without a warning on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had in a few seconds blotted out of existence 100,000 men, women, and children. Catholic Providence had not given the Christian West atomic bombs for nothing. It was the duty of the Western Allies to use them. Stepinac was a logical man. If he had used the Ustashi to impose Catholicism upon the Serb Orthodox, it was perfectly natural for him to look "upon the West to use its atomic power to impose Western civilization on Moscow and Belgrade, before it is too late."

The ruthlessness of such advocacy was typically Catholic. Christianity (that is, Catholicism) could be—indeed, had to be—imposed upon those rejecting Christian civilization, and, failing persuasion, this must be done by force. Such Catholic reasoning had made Ustashi Croatia possible; the same Catholic reasoning now had begun looking on wider horizons, to make a new Ustashi regime of a whole Continent.

Was that the personal whim of Archbishop Stepinac? It was the basic Catholic policy emanating directly from the Vatican. This was proved only three years later (1949) when another pillar of the Catholic Church—i.e. Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary—having planned to overthrow the Hungarian Government, reckoned on the military intervention of the "right" kind of Allies. Such intervention would have meant general war, and hence the use of atomic bombs. Cardinal Mindszenty had acted on the

assumption that the overthrow of the Hungarian Government, with the consequent "restoration of the Hungarian Catholic Monarchy of Hapsburg in its place, could be achieved with help from abroad...in case a new world war created such a situation," to quote his own words.^[5] "I regarded it (the outbreak of the third world war) as a basis," said the Cardinal. Mindszenty could well think and act in this fashion, in the comforting knowledge that behind him stood the Vatican, bent upon furthering its vast political schemes, on the assumption of a third world conflict. Vatican political post-war designs had precisely that "as a basis."

Are these speculations? Actions speak louder than words. Pius XII at this same period was not idle. He held talks with prominent military leaders of the "right" Allies upon whom first Stepinac and then Mindszenty had counted so much. British and, above all, American generals came and went in endless procession to and from His Holiness. To give one typical example: On one single day in June, 1949, Pius XII received five USA generals in successive audiences; General Mark Clark, wartime Commander of the U.S. Fifth Army in Italy, and subsequently Commander in the Korean war; Lieut.-General J. Cannon, Commanding General of the U.S. Air Force in Europe; Major-General Robert Douglass, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Armed Forces in Europe; Major-General Maxwell Taylor, Deputy Commander, European Command; and Lieut.-General Geoffrey Keyes, Commanding General of the U.S. forces in Austria.^[6] All these went to see, not the self-styled papal Prince of Peace; they went to talk with the Pope, like them, a man of war.^[7]

With the Vatican as a busy center of vast war designs, it was inevitable that some of its dignitaries in various countries should become its political reflections or spokesmen. Archbishops and Cardinals consequently spoke and acted on the assumption of war, and hence the use of atomic bombs. The Vatican, which within an astonishingly brief period had developed the most intimate relations with certain malign forces in the USA, was not merely indulging in wishful thinking when it passed on such information to its emissaries abroad. It informed them of what was going on behind the scenes in certain quarters. That this was a most sinister, incredible reality was demonstrated to a stunned world the following year. On August 27, 1950, Mr. Francis Matthews, during a speech in Boston, called upon the United States to become *the first aggressor for peace*.^[8] In plain words, to launch a third world conflict. That is, to initiate an atomic war. Mr. Francis Matthews was neither a crank nor an irresponsible citizen. He was a powerful man in the American Government: none other than the Secretary of the American Navy. But Mr. Matthews was also something which at this juncture was perhaps even more ominous. He was a fanatical Catholic, honoured many times for his services to Catholic welfare work; and, more than that, Mr. Matthews had been the head of the most villainous Catholic organization in the whole of the USA—that is, the Knights of Columbus. And, as if that were not sufficient, he was nothing less than a *secret Papal*

Chamberlain of Pope Pius XII.

With individuals so highly placed, the Vatican could not help being so well-informed of what was brewing in certain quarters preparing to be the *first aggressors for peace*. The information it passed to the Servants of the Church, therefore, moulded the policies of bishops and Cardinals, such as Stepinac and Mindszenty, playing the complicated Vatican game on the chessboard of postwar Europe. The declarations of secret Papal Chamberlains, of Cardinals, and of Archbishops, consequently, far from being the personal opinions of individuals, were the expression of hopes and policies entertained at the source which, as early as 1946, had already inspired all the main schemes and beliefs of Stepinac—namely, the Vatican.

Footnotes

1. This was done ten days before the final collapse.[\[Back\]](#)
2. Ustashi Ministers left their belongings in Stepinac's care. Minister Alajbegovic, later extradited by Anglo-American authorities and condemned to death by Zagreb on June 7, 1947, for instance, buried the files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Archbishop's palace, while Pavelic himself had all the phonograph records of his own speeches carefully concealed among the files of Archbishop Stepinac's Spiritual Board in Zagreb.[\[Back\]](#)
3. Very often it was the other way round. This was openly admitted by American diplomats. For a frank appraisal of this American Vatican intelligence traffic, see *Lying in State* (published 1952), the Memoirs of Mr. Stanton Griffis, who was U.S. Ambassador in Warsaw in 1947 and 1948. In it Mr. Griffis describes how he transmitted letters from Polish bishops to the Vatican, giving the names of the Church's representatives, to whom he also handed sums of dollars, although the illegal possession of dollars was then considered a capital offense.[\[Back\]](#)
4. Stepinac's statement to a British liaison officer. See *New Statesman & Nation*, London, October 26, 1946.[\[Back\]](#)
5. For more details, see the author's *Catholic Imperialism and World Freedom* (Watts), Chapter 20, "The Spectacular Case of Cardinal Mindszenty."[\[Back\]](#)
6. See announcement in *Osservatore Romano*, also *Universe*, June 10, 1949.[\[Back\]](#)

7. For more details of the Vatican's activities with the USA. at this period, see the author's *Catholic Imperialism and World Freedom* (Watts), Chapter 4, "Papal Promotion of Contemporary Religious Superstition for Political Purposes." [\[Back\]](#)
 8. See *The Times*, London, August 28, 1950. Also the *New York Times*.[\[Back\]](#)
-

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 11

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH PREPARES FOR THE FUTURE

It is the duty of any State, independently of its religious or ideological nature, to defend itself when threatened by domestic or external enemies. The Central Government of Yugoslavia, aware of Archbishop Stepinac's activities, past and present, could not continue to watch them indefinitely and aloof. Sooner or later, it had to consider steps to end them.

If the Government had had to deal with a simple political or military leader, the solution would have been ready at hand. But here the issue was complicated by the fact that a political leader was also the head of the Catholic Hierarchy. His arrest would raise complex religious repercussions at Rome, and therefore practically throughout the Western world.

The Yugoslav Government decided to solve the problem tactfully, by removing Stepinac, without raising the religious hornet's nest issue. To that end, it approached Pius XII, demanding the Archbishop's withdrawal from Zagreb. The Vatican, true to its reputation as a master of Sibylline moves, in October, 1945, charged an American in Yugoslavia, Bishop J.P. Hurley, of Florida, at that time acting as the Vatican Apostolic Nuncio there, to investigate the case and report on it direct to the Pope.

Bishop Hurley made extensive inquiries and wrote a comprehensive memorandum, which was speedily sent to Pius XII. Pius XII read it, mused upon it, and then decided to proceed as already planned with regard to Stepinac. Hurley's findings were promptly pigeonholed, and never heard of again.

The Yugoslav Government waited. As the head of the Government himself testified, "waited four months without receiving any reply."[\[1\]](#)

The Vatican was silent because Pius XII planned a war of his own, in which Stepinac was to play a very prominent role. It was the beginning of a psychological papal cold war. In this war religion would be used as the main instrument, directed at stirring up emotional hatred for political ends. Stepinac had to be sacrificed to the requirements of Catholic world diplomacy.[\[2\]](#) Having embarked on this course, the Vatican first contacted, not the waiting Yugoslav Government, but Archbishop Stepinac, whom it

ordered to carry on.

When the War Crimes Commission, which, meanwhile, was collecting documentation on war criminals, produced its evidence concerning the head of the Catholic Hierarchy, and presented it to the Yugoslav Government, the latter, after further vain attempts with the Vatican, decided to act. On September 18, 1946, Archbishop Stepinac was arrested. The utmost care was taken that the trial should be fair, in view of the fact that it was certain to raise all kinds of religious and political complications within and outside Yugoslavia. Although only about one-third of the Yugoslav population is Catholic, the Government saw to it that *all* the officials at the trial were Croatian Catholics. The world Press was invited to attend, which it did. On October 11, 1946, after a ten days' hearing, the Court—composed, it should be remembered, of Catholics—sentenced Archbishop Stepinac to sixteen years imprisonment.

The Vatican uttered a cry of horror, instantly amplified a thousandfold by the Catholic Hierarchies, Catholic agencies, and Catholic Press the world over. Pope Pius XII ordered the excommunication of all those who had taken part in the trial, from Tito himself down to the last official connected in any way with Stepinac's indictment. All received a solemn Catholic guarantee of eternal damnation in genuine Catholic brimstone and inextinguishable infernal fire. The thing was made even more fearsome by a papal afterthought, which promised the personal attention of Lucifer himself on all those so excommunicated. The Prince of Devils would torture all the unChristian persecutors of the Archbishop during eons without end. Papal authority had decreed so. Amen.

Had such authority been exercised only in hell, it would have worried fewer Christians than is generally believed. Infernal candidates must first emigrate to the next world, and no case has as yet been authenticated of anybody dying because of the scorching effect of the spiritual papal bolts. With millions of the living, however, this same papal authority is neither problematic nor fictitious. It is real, widespread, and dangerous. It can tap vast sources of power at will, whether to help its friends and allies or to dismay its enemies. Last but not least, it can engender the darkest currents of religious and political emotionalism, to control and use the deceived masses of Catholics and non-Catholics alike to further its own interests. The case of Stepinac once more strikingly demonstrated this.

The Pope set in motion the vast machinery of Catholic propaganda, which in no time flooded the world with such mountainous distortions and such plain dishonesty as to shame the most deceitful of all the devils in hell. Overnight Stepinac, the authoritarian leader, the political plotter, the politician, the promoter of the forcible conversions, the

tolerator and indirect instigator of the Ustashi massacres, was made to appear as Stepinac the defender of true democracy, the most holy Archbishop, the courageous champion of religious freedom, the persecuted and the martyr. Millions accepted the Catholic version. The result was that soon large sections of the Western world, who until then had not even bothered with the whole thing, hailed Stepinac as the pitiful victim of anti-Christian barbarism.

The lay Press followed suit, exalting Stepinac as the champion of Christianity fighting the powers of darkness. Religious and political leaders joined in the chorus. Foreign Offices, heads of States, and, indeed, whole Governments of Catholic and non-Catholic lands sent official protests against "such unheard-of religious persecution." Questions were heatedly asked in the British House of Commons, in the French, Italian, and Belgian Chambers of Deputies, in the American House of Representatives and Senate. In the USA. President Truman was subjected to a tremendous pressure to force him to intervene on behalf of the "martyred Stepinac." A worldwide movement was set up to induce the United Nations to come to the rescue of a man who had defended all the religious and civil liberties for which the United Nations was said to stand.

The emotional mass distortion engineered by the master minds at the Vatican soon began to yield its poisonous harvest, not so much in the religious realm as where it was potentially a thousandfold more dangerous: that is, in the political field.

At this period, it must be remembered, the Cold War was still in its earliest stage. The blind emotionalism engendered by the trial and its aftermath was used to widen the growing gap between the Russian Dominated Communist and the American-led capitalist worlds.

Soviet Russia slowed down its demobilization and kept a large standing land army on a war footing. The USA pushed ahead its war preparations to such an extent that, after the Stepinac trial had taken place, it had already spent the colossal sum of almost one billion dollars on stock-piling.^[3] By 1947 the military forces of the world numbered 19 million, and were maintained at an annual cost of 27,000 million dollars. This, less than two years after the fall of Hitler. From then onward military expenditure rocketed to astronomical figures. By the time that Yugoslavia—who, meanwhile, owing to ideological developments, had leaned towards the West—partially set Archbishop Stepinac free (winter 1951-2) and Stepinac, from Archbishop, became a Cardinal (1953), the world had been split asunder.^[4]

The American factories were made to hum, while the American Air Force, Army, and Navy were posted throughout the world in main strategic places, ready to strike.

Colossal expenditures for war were voted by the American Administration—e.g. 129,000 million dollars, voted by Congress within less than two years (1950-2) for military armaments and constructions.^[5] By early 1953 in Europe alone the USA. had already built more than a hundred airfields, many specially equipped for atomic operations, as defensive-offensive bases against Russia.^[6]

In Communist Russia preparations of the same magnitude as a defensive-offensive war policy were carried out, with impetus to match their Western counterparts. Within a few brief years from the end of the Second World War billions of roubles were appropriated for military purposes. In no time, while Soviet Russia became the arsenal of the East, the USA became the arsenal of the West, and its most powerful political military leader. The nations of the world, although not yet out of the second world massacre, made ready for the oncoming third. Politicians, generals, heads of governments, spoke of atomic wars. Armies reassembled, ready to march. A bloody rehearsal of another global slaughter, in imitation of the Spanish Civil War of 1939, where the USA ideologically hostile armies rehearsed a small conflict to be ready for a big one, was staged in Korea in the summer of 1950.

A gigantic armaments race undermined the economy of whole nations, thus rendering war between the two mighty Eastern and Western blocs not so much probable as inevitable.

While the increasingly powerful militaries asked for ever more colossal appropriations, from Vatican Hill came unctuous slogans for peace mingled with veiled threats, invocations to religion, and sanctimonious condemnations of the "atheistic enemies of Christianity." In cynical betrayal of the masses of honest, humble believers, the Vatican was plotting feverishly in the political-diplomatic fields to further its designs. Then one day, above all this, voices were heard—the official voices of the reorganized bands of Ustashi, calling to their members not to scatter, as the hour when they, the Catholic Ustashi of Croatia, would fight side by side with the democratic defenders of Western civilization was fast approaching. The glorious battalions of the Ustashi had to make ready. But while they were willing to fight for world liberty, they had to prepare to do so only in the name of Catholic Croatia, in Catholic units, and under the Croatian flag. No Ustashi, therefore, was permitted to join a foreign army. The appeal of the resuscitated terrorist bands—with the headquarters in the USA.—ran thus:

Headquarters of the V. assembly of Croatian Armed Forces, having jurisdiction over all subjects of the Croatian Armed Forces (Hr or Sn) living on the territory of the European States. It has been learned that some persons, unauthorized, are endeavouring to persuade individuals to enlist in

foreign armies. By the order of the Supreme Command of all Croatian Armed Forces, all subjects living in any European State be notified that no individual person is authorized for such activity, nor is it permitted enlisting in foreign armies in any capacity, without a special authorized permit. The Supreme Command of all the Croatian Armed forces will call its forces to arm against Bolshevism when the time arrives to fight side by side with other anti-Communistic nations, under our own flag and within our Croatian army formations.

Headquarters V. Assembly,

General Drinyanin, August, 1950.[\[7\]](#)

These were noble words. The words of an idealist longing for liberty to prevail on earth. Many acclaimed the new defenders of freedom. In certain quarters, however, they knew better. For General Drinyanin was the alias of former Chief Commandant of all the terrible Catholic concentration camps of Croatia, the leader of the bloody "Ustashi Defense" formations responsible for the massacre of 200,000 prisoners in the camps of Jasenovac, the "protector" of all the jackbooted or soutaned monsters who, a few short years before, had been engaged in the forcible conversions to Catholicism, under the aegis of Stepinac, now Cardinal.

While the Ustashi, protected in the Western Hemisphere, were sounding a new trumpet-call from the north, their leader, Ante Pavelic, was busy in the south on the same type of activity on which he had been engaged prior to the Second World War. For Pavelic had in 1948, thanks again to Vatican help, managed to leave Europe. Supplied with false documents given in Rome on an international Red Cross passport, he went to another Catholic country harbouring Nazi leaders: [\[8\]](#) the Argentine.[\[9\]](#)

The false passport which had brought him to safety was furnished by another Catholic priest, a former Ustashi, Father Draganovic, residing in Rome. Priest Draganovic, to make sure that the former Chief should reach the Argentine safely, accompanied him personally as far as Buenos Aires. There he briefed certain high Argentine Hierarchs, after which he duly returned to Rome (end of 1949). Priest Draganovic had acted not only as a zealous Catholic, as a priest and as an Ustashi, but also as the representative of the Vatican, which was concerned with the future of a man, Ante Pavelic, and of an idea, ruthless Ustashi-ism, both of which, because they had succeeded in establishing a model Catholic State once, might succeed in reestablishing it in a future which was, perhaps, not far ahead.

Pavelic at once became active. Most of his meetings were held in Catholic parish halls in Buenos Aires. Catholic priests and friars participated in them—e.g. at the meeting held on February 5, 1951, five Catholic friars attended.^[10] The majority of these meetings and similar activities were organized by priests, prominent among them the Ustashi Catholic Padre, the Rev. Mato Luketa. ^[11] Pavelic took to the Argentine three things:

- (a) Papal blessing, as good an introduction to the Argentine Hierarchy, and hence to the Government, as any;
- (b) loot from Croatia;^[12]
- (c) the Ustashi programme.

While some of his lieutenants kept Ustashi-ism alive in the USA and in Europe, Pavelic set about coordinating it in the Argentine. Meetings were held, papers were published, Ustashi abroad were organized. In 1949 Pavelic established the *Hrvatska Drzavotvorna Stranka*. In that same year he held six large meetings of the Ustashi, most of them in parish halls such as the Catholic Croat Parish Hall on Avenida Belgrano. Pavelic counseled that "all honest Croats in exile should belong" to his movement. Thereupon he instructed them all not to take Argentine nationality, so that they would be able to leave the country without any hindrance.

Pavelic talked of war and of blood. The titles of his articles told their tale: *The Ideological War* (La Guerra Ideologica),^[13] and *The Call of Blood*, the latter being an introduction to the proclamation of the resurrected Party. The basis of Pavelic's new policy was war. Like another pillar of political Catholicism before him—i.e. Cardinal Mindszenty—so also Pavelic hoped for the outbreak of the Third World War. "War will soon break out," he foretold on May 13, 1949, "and then the liberation of Croatia will come."

The next year, as we have already seen, the United States Secretary of the Navy, the secret Chamberlain of the Pope, shocked the world by openly asking the USA to start a "preventive atomic war" against Russia, in order to "liberate" the people of the earth.

The Republican platform adopted in Chicago (July, 1952), after demanding an end to "the negative futile and immoral policy of containment, which abandons countless human beings to a despotism and godless terrorism," ^[14] asked for a policy directed at the specific promotion of sabotage, raising of resistance movements, industrial disturbances, and, last but not least, the establishment of émigré governments.

The American people went to the polls (November 4, 1952) and sent to power the Republican Party. With few exceptions unbounded rejoicing greeted the Republican victory throughout the Catholic world. The Pope himself, on hearing that General Eisenhower had been elected President, hastened to send by cable his "divine blessing upon yourself and your administration,"¹⁵ Pavelic, in the Argentine, asked all the Ustashi to hail the Republican triumph. Ustashi priests gave special thanksgivings in South and North America, as well as in Europe. Te Deums were sung. Divine Providence was again coming to the rescue. It had sent into power an American Government which was determined to create "political task forces" to free "captive" countries. Indeed, to establish "émigré governments." Were not the reorganized Ustashi a "political task force?" Was not Catholic Croatia a "captive" country? Nobody could deny that Pavelic's new Ustashi Government was an "émigré government." For truly, Pavelic had set up a new Ustashi Government. The New Ustashi Government had in fact been officially established by him in 1951, in the Argentine. Its religious and political programme had not changed an iota from that of the old Ustashi dictatorship. With the Republican Administration in the White House, with a General determined on a strong foreign policy as President, with a Soviet Russia preparing ruthless counter-measures, the world continued to move faster and faster towards catastrophe. Fanatical groups prepared and waited for "the day." That is, for the outbreak of a third world war, when the establishment of "émigré governments" would take place, among them the New Government of Croatia, ruled by the Ustashi and the Church.

Ante Pavelic in South America, General Drinyanin in the USA, Father Draganovic in Rome, like hundreds of Catholic priests, friars, and laymen everywhere, had begun once more, as before the Second World War, to pray and work for World War III, so that they might be enabled again to bring "freedom"—namely, to unloose their reign of terror upon a newly devastated Croatia. To such depths can the ideal of Liberty be made to sink.

Footnotes

1. In the words of Marshal Tito:

When the Pope's representative to our Government, Bishop Hurley, paid me his first visit, I raised the question of Stepinac. "Have him transferred from Yugoslavia, I said, for otherwise we shall be obliged to place him under arrest. We waited four months without receiving any reply.

Tito, Zagreb, October 31, 1946. [\[Back\]](#)

2. This was later confirmed by Stepinac himself, when, during an interview with C.L. Sulzberger, of the *New York Times*, having been told that Marshal Tito was willing to set him free or to transfer him to a monastery, Stepinac replied that "whether or not I shall resume my office, whether I go to a monastery or whether I remain here (in prison) depends only upon the Holy Father. Such things do not depend upon Marshal Tito. They depend only upon the Holy Father, the Pope, and upon no one else." See also *Universe*, November 17, 1950. This policy subsequently led to the breaking of Yugoslav/Vatican diplomatic relations (December 18, 1952) prior to and after Stepinac being made a Cardinal (January, 1953) and the projected visit of Marshal Tito to Britain in 1953. In an attempt to embarrass the British Government and the United Nations, the British Hierarchy attacked the Marshal as a persecutor of Catholics. At the same time an effort was made to whitewash Stepinac. Articles with these aims appeared in the *Tablet* and were reprinted in pamphlet form by the *Sword of the Spirit*. These efforts would have been comic, if the British public had not been ready to believe them. [\[Back\]](#)

3. The USA began war preparations less than one year after Hitler's death (1945). These consisted of stockpiling essential raw materials, a 100 percent war measure. On July 23, 1946, the USA passed Public Law 520 of the 79th Congress, approved by both Houses, for this purpose. The combined stock-piling in 1946 stood already at 4,536,000,000 dollars. From 1946 to 1950, before the Korean war began in June, the USA stockpile stood at 8,300,000,000 dollars. No figures were available from the USSR. [\[Back\]](#)

4. Owing to the split of Communist Yugoslavia from Soviet Russia, Yugoslavia became financially and militarily partially dependent upon the USA. American loans were asked for and granted. Tito himself publicly acknowledged that Yugoslavia had received over 1,000 million dollars' worth of aid from the West (Marshal Tito, Belgrade, March 16, 1952). The Vatican attempted to influence the negotiations, via Catholic pressure in the USA, putting as a condition the unconditional release of Archbishop Stepinac. [\[Back\]](#)

5. See *The Times*, London, November 10, 1952. [\[Back\]](#)

6. Officially disclosed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Paris, November 25, 1952. This did not include the many bases in Britain, North Africa, Greece, and Turkey. See *The Times* London, *Manchester Guardian*, November 26, 1952, *New York Times*, and other papers. [\[Back\]](#)

7. Published in the Ustashi paper, *Danitza*, Chicago, ILL., No. 13, IX, 1950.[\[Back\]](#)
8. Franco's Catholic Spain, after the defeat of Nazi Germany, gave asylum to numerous Nazi leaders and war criminals—e.g. Dr. Schacht, Hitler's Finance Minister; Otto Skorzeny, the SS Agent who rescued Mussolini in 1943; Von Papen, Vice Chancellor under Chancellor Hitler in 1933. It is noteworthy that Catholic Von Papen, like many Ustashi leaders, used a religious smoke to carry out renewed Nazi intrigues for the revival of European Fascism, e.g. when ostensibly a private participant in the Eucharistic Congress in Barcelona, he had lengthy private interviews with General Franco (May, 1952). See Nazi plot in West Germany, 1953, *et sequitur*, *The Times*, etc. [\[Back\]](#)
9. Pavelic reached Buenos Aires on November 6, 1948, on the Italian passenger ship, s. s. Sestiere, under the name of Dal Aranyos. His ticket was No. 16. The Argentine Legation in Rome knew his real identity very well. It had repeatedly been pressed by the Vatican authorities to grant Pavelic a visa. The Argentine Co-ordination Federal, the counter-espionage police, had also been informed in advance of his identity.[\[Back\]](#)
10. Intelligence reports, files of the Yugoslav Government. "Pavelic, Dr. Ante - Some Biographical Notes and Activities since 1945."[\[Back\]](#)
11. This priest served in the Catholic Church in Avenida Belgrano, No. 1151, Buenos Aires. See the Yugoslav Government's official indictment of Ante Pavelic.[\[Back\]](#)
12. Consisting of twelve chests of gold and one chest of jewelry. This according to the official statement of the Yugoslav Government in its indictment of Ante Pavelic. [\[Back\]](#)
13. *Dinamica Social*, Nos. 5 and 6, 1951.[\[Back\]](#)
14. See *Manchester Guardian*, July 22, 1952.[\[Back\]](#)
15. Wire sent by Pope Pius XII to General Eisenhower, to which the President-elect replied: "Profoundly grateful to Your Holiness for your blessing and expression of goodwill." See *Universe*, November 14, 1952.[\[Back\]](#)

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 12

THE VATICAN AND THE USA AS THE DEFENDERS OF THE FASCIST CRIMINALS OF WORLD WAR TWO

The Vatican, as the open protectors of Fascist Nazi Croatia and other extreme right-wing dictatorships of Europe, with the collapse of the Fascist World, became the secretive helper of those who were buried under the ruins of the Hitlerian Empire.

After the main actors of the Nazi regime, following the Nuremberg Trial, were executed by the victorious Allies, thousands of minor war criminals took cover under the protective wings of the Catholic Church.

Many sought refuge, literally in convents, monasteries, seminaries or other religious and semi-religious institutions. Catholic authorities acted mostly in the name of "Christian" charity or on humanitarian grounds, as many of them had already done with the Jews, when these were persecuted by the Nazis.

Others, however helped the fleeing war criminals, for purely ideological motives. Amongst these not only heads of Catholic institutions, but also Bishops, and indeed even Cardinals. Because of the latter, many important war criminals, those who had prominently assisted the Vatican to set up the Catholic satrapies of Croatia or Slovakia, were welcomed within the walls of Vatican City itself.

The result of such "hospitality" was that in no time Vatican City became overcrowded with "guests" whose main concern appeared to be not piety, but an obvious anxiety to avoid identification. Thanks to the tacit cooperation of the Vatican authorities, the "guests" obtained practical immunity from any official or semi-official investigation. Even then, curiosity of newsmen or of nosey anti-Fascist organizations and individuals, were carefully avoided and successfully shunned.

The Vatican campaign of protective secretiveness was maintained, owing to the fact that Vatican City was considered a sovereign state. This was also due to the fact that many of the victorious Allies did not wish to antagonize the Pope, whose notorious past had become part of recent history in his relationship with the Nazi regime.

The immunity given by the Vatican offered the best hope for many war criminals, who

had been officially branded as such, from falling into the hands of the Allies. Since the protection of the Vatican offered the best guarantee of avoiding arrest and prosecution, the number of those seeking protection augmented until the secretive corridors of the Vatican could no longer contain them.

Many therefore were given Roman abodes or were placed with Catholic families where they could live undetected; protected as they were by the discretion of their hosts, all pious Catholics, or if not pious, at least eager for the money thus paid them by clergy charged with their welfare.

The discreet patronage of the local parishes and busy monsignori going to and from the Vatican offices, and the even more discreet mobilization of Catholic institutes, soon accommodated very large numbers of "refugees" feverishly seeking concealment.

Vatican City meanwhile became a veritable beehive of bureaucratic operations, mostly centered upon paperwork. Birth certificates, visas, passports, and similar other such documentations were manufactured, prepared, and delivered with professional efficiency.

Even more important such documents were "activated" with such proficiency as to defy the most scrupulous scrutiny on the part of any over-zealous official at the sundry frontiers of the victorious Allies.

The efficiency of such false documents astonished the authorities and the Allies themselves. It soon became an industry, even outside the Vatican walls. The explanation of course was a simple one.

First of all the Allies, or rather certain departments of the Allies, had issued discreet instructions that certain passports, even if of a suspicious nature, should not be over-scrutinized. The instructions were tacitly followed. This resulted in thousands of minor officially branded war criminals escaping the official net.

Thousands managed to flee to the South American Republics, to Australia and even to the USA itself. The influx of "wanted refugees" in those countries became such a controversial issue that it affected the relationship of various Allied governments when it became obvious that there had been put in operation a general policy directed at saving fleeing war criminals from Europe.

The suspicions had been anything but baseless. The policy had been made to operate since the collapse of Nazi Germany. And, curiously enough, it had been conceived by

none other than certain sections of the USA Intelligence. The CIA at that time did not yet exist, but the equivalent of its predecessor did; certain elements within were already making preparation for a forthcoming war against the Soviet Union. Hence the discreet help to potential recruits for a potential USA-Allies invasion of the Russian provinces, as we shall see presently.

The success of the joint policies of the Vatican and the USA, directed at the concealment and escape of thousands of war criminals, was due also the fact that secretive gates had been created across the frontiers, with that specific purpose. Frontier officials had been briefed with the task of "detecting and protecting" individuals holding "specific" documents; that is false papers, visas and sundry documents, beginning with phony passports.

These, if and when recognized as false by officials not in the know, were made to become "positive." In other words, certain officials were authorized to accept them as "officially" genuine, thus permitting their holders to enter into the various countries of destination which included the USA.

Such general travesty would have been impossible had it been left exclusively to the various "false documentation" factories of Europe, beginning with those based in Italy, starting with that of the Vatican.

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 13

THE MAFIA, THE VATICAN AND THE USA. WHY THEY ENLISTED WAR CRIMINALS, STALIN AND ONE-THIRD OF EUROPE

One of the major agencies connected with the operation was the Mafia. The Mafia had been revitalized by the USA, even before the Allies invaded Sicily. The USA in fact "recruited" the Mafia altogether into the U.S. Army. It became part and parcel of the USA command. Mafiosi became the principal strategists of the inexperienced Americans.

The Mafiosi exploited the Americans with the cunning of Sicilian foxes and the alertness of keen businessmen, ready for any opportunity to make money. They "advised" American officers who knew nothing about local or Italian politics, making them commit blunders of the greatest magnitude.

The "Mafiosi" never let a golden opportunity to make money pass. Once they heard of the passports and visa factories, they entered into the field with a vengeance. Their expertise in the subtle art of falsification was second to none. They worked for the Vatican and even for the USA itself.

Thanks to the protection of the USA and their historical cunning, the Mafia eventually prospered to such an extent that in the process it built itself into the mighty Mafia Empire of the future, which spanned the Atlantic for decades to come.

It had political results of far reaching importance for Italy itself. It helped mightily to render Sicily a semi-autonomous island where the Mafia ruled supreme, affecting Rome and the Italian Administration, including Italian foreign policy. The relationship of the Mafia with the Vatican remained very closed during many years, not only after the war but also during the war itself. Indeed, the Mafia, on more than one occasion, acted as a fairy god-mother for the Vatican. The most striking case was when it helped the Vatican transfer tons of pure silver from Naples to Rome to avoid the Germans melting it down, to pay for expenses of the German occupation.

The present author, who during the war had been broadcasting daily to the partisans, advising them to harass the Germans who were then in Italy, went to Naples in 1975 and visited the cathedral. There he was struck by an altar, seemingly made of what appeared to be pure solid silver. Upon asking whether that was so, he was told by the

altar's guardian that it was solid silver. The tons of silver, the man then explained, had been saved from the Germans then occupying Naples, thanks to the Mafia. To the present author's stupefaction, the individual then told a tale.

The Vatican, having heard rumours to the effect that the Germans, then occupying Italy, had made plans to melt down the silver of the altar of St. Januarius to pay for their occupation of southern Italy, contacted the Mafia and asked for their cooperation. The Mafia, whose members besides being keen businessmen are also immensely religious, accepted the Vatican's proposal with pious alacrity. Since they were cooperating with the Germans in sundry secret operations, they were permitted by the latter to transport their wares, food, black-market items and the like, to the North, that is to Rome. The result was that the silver of the altar was transported in Mafia lorries to the very entrance of the Vatican where it was safely deposited.

The present author made inquiries as to the veracity of the story. (During the war he had made many broadcasts about the Germans having experimented with the "liquification" of the blood of the Saint which, according to the Catholic Church is a "miracle." This is taken as such by the Neapolitan populace. The latter, take it as a good omen if the "miracle" occurs; as a bad one if the "blood" does not become liquid.)

He discovered that the Mafia, true to its reputation, had worked for all three employers, the Germans, the Vatican and the USA, simultaneously. A masterpiece of "international cooperation."

The recruitment of the Mafia would have been reprehensible on the part of both the USA and the Vatican, had it not been for the fact that both wished to help the flight of war criminals from Europe, each with its own objectives.

Whereas the USA wanted to rescue them to carry out political operations against Soviet Russia and the oncoming Cold War, the Vatican, while thinking upon the same lines, had been motivated by an additional objective. Namely to help former political and religious supporters whom it had blessed during, the reign of terror under the Nazi imperium. The Vatican protective attitudes had been prompted not only by seemingly *Christian* charity, but also by the consolidation of its newly born secret alliance with Washington.

The basic motivation of such strange Vatican-USA fellowship, which at first sight seemed to be a most improbable partnership, would have appeared incomprehensible, had not the motivation of both been taken into account. Their joint motivations were derived by the necessity of their part to recruit, as energetically and as quickly as

possible, trustworthy anti-Russian, anti-Communist battalions ready to fight against Bolshevik Russia. And where could the Vatican and the State Department find such ready, dedicated, anti-Communist recruits, if not in the rank and file of the defeated anti-Communists of Europe, namely in the fleeing war criminals now seeking asylum in the Americas and the USA? Had they and their comrades not attacked, occupied and almost defeated the Russian hordes, almost single handed, while America was sending billions to help Stalin? Perhaps now the USA, who had come face to face with Stalin, had realized at last her mistake. The fugitives from a defeated Europe were now ready to help the USA rectify her error; that is help the USA fight Soviet Russia, her former ally.

Thousands, not necessarily pro-Nazi, sympathized with such thoughts. Many in the USA openly said so. Churchill himself agreed. The general consensus was that Stalin had become a menace no less horrendous than Hitler. The consensus was supported not by speculation, but by menacing facts. The reality facing the victorious Allies was that Stalin had swallowed up whole regions. Indeed, in addition to extinguishing former independent countries, like Estonia, Latvia and others, he had occupied one-third of Europe proper. He had turned previous sovereign nations, like Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Hungary, into Russian satellites. Moves were made by Moscow to do likewise in Asia, the Near East, Africa, and even in the Western Hemisphere, as Cuba was eventually to prove, not long afterwards.

The USA and the Vatican were alarmed and decided to act in unison. The results were the first secret moves which, within a very brief period, became known as the Cold War. That culminated with the Korean War of the fifties and the Vietnam War of the sixties and seventies. The recruitment of proven anti-Communist individuals, from the fleeing war criminals, therefore became part and parcel of the USA Vatican grand postwar strategy. More than charity or compassion, or even ideological sympathy, it became a positive strategic campaign by both. They wished to recruit the right material for the oncoming anti-Soviet crusade of the near future. The battalions composed of the war criminals, still rabidly anti-red and anti-Russian, would have become the spearhead of a new grand crusade against not Hitlerite Europe, but against a Stalinized Soviet Russia and the third of Europe now under the Soviet yoke of control.

Editor's Note

Russia only occupied countries that were on the direct invasion route to Moscow. Austria was liberated by the Soviets but that country was handed back to them right after the war and did not become a Russian satellite!!

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter14

THE USA AND VATICAN SECRET CAMPAIGN TO RESCUE WAR CRIMINALS

While Vatican City and its many extraterritorial buildings in Rome turned into the protective semi-official refuge for hundreds of war criminals, the USA's State Department became busy integrating many of them within its multi-varied branched subterranean machinery, operating outside official officialdom. The operations, although secretive, eventually became known. The immediate result was increasing opposition to them all. Because of this, thousands of fleeing war criminals were diverted hastily to South American countries, with the connivance of the secret services of the USA. Many were helped to enter the USA itself and to settle there, under different names and phony identities.

The State Department and the Secret Services tried to minimize the disclosures which meanwhile had begun to leak ever more frequently via the media to a shocked postwar world. To millions of war veterans and war victims of both continents, the whole policy of protection of war criminals became offensive. It was repudiated and condemned by all, with few exceptions. The spearhead of such universal condemnation were the Jews. The disclosure of the Nazi concentration camps had shocked the world and, of course, world Judaism. The European Jews, many of whom had emigrated into the USA, were certainly not going to accept the ambiguous form of American Catholic appeasement towards their former tormentors. The decades of the Fascist nightmare were still too vivid to be forgotten, forgiven, or to be relegated to past history.

The terrorized and wounded Jewish soul thirsted for prompt merciless revenge. This became encapsulated into the atavistic slogan of "an eye for an eye." The experience of the concentration camps, and many of their survivors, maximized the slogan into "one thousand Arian-Christian-Nazi eyes for one Jewish eye." Their thirst for revenge, far from remaining encapsulated into a mere verbal blood curdling rhetorical Biblical quotation, became their solid menacing policy from the very beginning. It helped to shape the policies of the postwar world, even before the Second World War had ended. This was done via the activities of the Jewish Lobby in Washington. A presence which no State Department, Secret Service, political party, or even American President would ignore at their own peril.

The emergence of Israel as the Messianic fulfillment of the Judaic dream, in addition to adding tangible religious dimension to World Judaism outside America, made the American Jews the most pervasive ethnic influence of America. This was so since American Judaism, like American Catholicism, having penetrated both political parties, could affect the policies of any USA administration. The Jewish campaign, conducted with hammering persistence via a national media, a large proportion of which was controlled by Jewish interests, affected the policy of the USA. The operations directed at helping and recruiting war criminals were curtailed. Discretion became the watchword of both the State Department and the U.S. Secret Service. The more so, since the Jews set out to hunt war criminals, wherever and whenever they could, often with striking results, independently of them both.

At the Vatican the campaign had been most unwelcome, the more so since the Jews had openly condemned the Pope, not only for not having helped them during the Hitlerite terror, but also for having been pro-Nazi. The Vatican, however, resented the Jewish campaign because of its long-range political implications. That is, it was imperiling the secret joint Vatican-USA preparation for an anti-Russian crusade, to be eventually identified with the Cold War. Because of this Jewish interference with their plans, the Vatican and the State Department then formulated a joint, most secretive promotional campaign of recruitment, whose watchword became "immense prudence." The new policy permitted their recruitment to operate, as in the past, with efficiency and with impunity, notwithstanding Jewish vigilance.

The Vatican-USA new campaign soon became identified with the passing of a massive promulgation of equivocal legislation meant to deal with all kinds of information connected with recent and current recruitment and protection of war criminals. Legislative measures, thus once law, closed the door for good to any curious or mischievous investigator.

The result of such bolting of the door with legal nails was that identification of war criminals, already in the USA or about to arrive there, became even more difficult. Even more significant, it became a protective legal umbrella under which potential and real war criminals could take cover and avoid detection. The task of having them identified and arrested became almost an impossible one, protected as they were by obscure official specifications. Many of these never saw even the light. In fact, hundreds became so secret that none, with the exception of certain military or intelligence mandarins, could ever lay their hands on them. Most of such documents, that is those dealing with war criminals, were declared "classified," that is, they were made inaccessible to anybody except the USA Intelligence.

As the years and the decades went by, however, such "classification" became "declassified." "Declassification" revealed what had been suspected all the time, namely that the USA and the Vatican had helped and indeed had "shipped" thousands of war criminals to Australia, Latin America and indeed to the USA and Canada, even before the war had ended.

"Declassification," although helpful, nevertheless continued to be obstructed by rigid legislation which permitted only a glimpse of light to be seen as the time limit expired. As it happened during a news conference, in May 1986, for instance when USA Army Counter-intelligence Corps documents were "declassified" and interpreted.[\[1\]](#)

The spokesman, who had been tracing U.S. government involvement in helping Nazi war criminals for seven years, said that investigation of war criminals conducted by the USA after the War, "had been a joke."

As of May, 1986 there were probably 6,500 of an estimated 10,000 Nazi collaborators who had been assisted by the pro-war criminals organization, still living in the U.S.

According to *The Times* of London. "The U.S. had classified the documents until now in order to protect allied governments and the Vatican from the embarrassing revelations in them", it said.

"They showed that the intelligence agencies of France and Britain, immediately after the war, revived a former Nazi organization, called Intermarium, he said. The organization was formed originally by a Russian tsarist general shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution in order to fight communism.

"The intelligence agencies of France, Britain, Australia, Canada, Austria, West Germany, and Italy, as well as high Vatican officials, had then become involved in recruiting former Nazi war criminals for the organization. They rearmed and funded them while helping them to emigrate, Mr. Loftus said.

"The central governments of these countries apparently did not know about their intelligence agencies' activities.

"The U.S. Army Counter-intelligence Corps found out about the allied involvement in 1947, and the U.S. decided to get involved itself and to keep the entire operation secret." [\[2\]](#)

Intermarium was only one of the many organizations meant to help war criminals. The

U.S. Intelligence had at least a dozen, several of which are still in operational use. Many of them are disguised under equivocal names. The Vatican, however, was the senior partner since it had the multiplicity of such agencies. This was so because it had the advantage of the Catholic Church, which permitted the Vatican to apparel its organizations under the disguise of religion. The result was that it became practically impossible to track down their identity or nature of operations, whether they had been classified, or declassified. The efforts would have stirred up a hornet's nest in the American Catholic World. A hornet's nest, which even the American Jews had considered prudent not to disturb. Such religious or semi-religious organizations are still dispensing what amounts to war pensions to elderly war criminals, or to their families, under the disguise of charitable bodies. The official exchange of USA-Vatican ambassadors, in 1984, dealt with the problem to the satisfaction of both parties. This is one of the many secret items of which the U.S. public knows nothing.

Footnotes

1. *The Times*, London, December 5, 1986. Also UPI, Rockland, Massachusetts, 11 May, 1986 - about USA war documents, declassified before Christmas 1985. [\[Back\]](#)
 2. Declarations of one John Loftus, UPI, May 15, 1986. [\[Back\]](#)
-

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 15

THE VATICAN SAVES THE CATHOLIC WAR CRIMINALS OF CROATIA—ROMAN MONASTERIES AS THEIR ASYLUMS—THE CROATIAN HOLOCAUST MINIMIZED

Pope Pius XII (1939-1958), who during the Second World War had secretly changed sides, and had formulated a policy against World Communism, thus enlisting the help of the USA as soon as the Nazi edifice began to collapse, took steps to save many of those who had supported the Vatican before and during the War.

The top Nazis, who had fallen into the hands of the Allies, were brought before the Nuremberg Tribunal. Most of them were hanged. Several escaped. One of these was Franz Von Papen, an official war criminal. Pius XII pleaded for him behind the scene and Von Papen not only avoided death but after a few years was released. Von Papen was the leader of the Catholic Party of Germany. At one time he had been Chancellor. He had helped Hitler into power, to such an extent that after Hitler became head of Germany, he made Von Papen his Vice-Chancellor. Von Papen was one of the most prominent war criminals saved by the Vatican. The Catholic hierarchies of many countries did the same with minor officials.

Therefore, when the Catholic leaders of the Catholic State of Croatia fled the country, they looked to the Vatican as a refuge. Many of them were helped in their escape by the local clergy or by ordinary Catholics. As we have already seen, Ante Pavelic, after many difficulties, managed to reach Rome where he absconded wearing the habit of a monk. When he was given a false passport and identity he sailed for South America, where he became active with the open support of the church. Minor war criminals from Croatia were received with a special cordiality, since they had one clear distinction that most other war criminals had not. The Croat refugees had supported a regime which had been inspired and blessed by the Pope. A Catholic Croatian State which, had Hitler won the war, would have become the model Catholic State of the Balkan regions.



One of the principal Catholic personalities to help Hitler into power was Franz Von Papen, leader of the Catholic Party of Germany, friend of E. Pacelli, the Papal Nuncio to Munich, later Pope Pius XII.

When Chancellor of Germany, Von Papen tried to set up a Catholic-Nazi Coalition.

It was he who persuaded Von Hindenburg to ask Hitler to form a Government.

Once Hitler became first Chancellor of Nazi Germany, he made Von Papen his Vice-Chancellor (January 1933). Thus, the Leader of the German Catholic Party was second in command only to Hitler in Hitlerite Germany. Von Papen and Pacelli eventually negotiated for a Concordat in which Hitler pledged to support the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church to support Hitler (June 1933).

The Croat refugees were given a privileged welcome by the Catholic authorities all over Rome. They were given facilities which few had had. When the monasteries and seminaries could no longer contain them, they were permitted to enter and hide in several convents inhabited exclusively by nuns. At first, the sudden increase in the number of the inmates surprised not a few people. Then, of course, it was realized that the truth was not what it appeared to be. Innocent observers had noticed that several so-called "nuns" were of rough appearance, masculine demeanor and appeared to be unshaven. Then, following a period which varied from weeks to months, the nunish populations decreased with the suddenness with which they had originally increased. The false documents enabled them to travel outside Italy, at which time they sailed to various countries including Australia. The success and speed of their evacuation, and

lack of detection by certain authorities who should have known better, indicated the efficiency of the Vatican campaign. It must not be forgotten that many officials of the victorious government were devout Catholics. These, in cooperation with the sundry national hierarchies, worked together to ensure the safety of the fleeing Catholic Croat "refugees."

By the time the Allies began to search for them, they had been dispersed out of their reach. If many of them were still hidden somewhere in Europe, it was a certainty that they were absconded in Catholic institutions in various disguises and under the patronage of Catholic lay or religious authorities. The genocide in Croatia, although of immense horror, however, did not get the publicity which it should have. Its reality, while appreciated by the world at large, was soon minimized. Except for those who had been personally or collectively affected by it, it was almost forgotten by the postwar world. The cause for such oblivion was due to various factors. First among these was the general background of the postwar world which wished to forget the atrocities of the conflict. But more than that, the oblivion of the Croatian massacre was caused by the two most powerful lobbies in existence. That of the Jews and that of the Vatican. Each competed with the other in minimizing the



General B. Mirkovich with the author.

General Mirkovich played a paramount role during the Second World War, when Hitler was master of practically the whole of Europe and Great Britain stood alone.

Upon Yugoslavia signing a pact with Hitler (25 March 1941), thanks to which Yugoslavia sided with Nazi Germany, General Mirkovich only two days later (27 March) overthrew the Yugoslav Government and abrogated its treaty with Hitler thus bringing Yugoslavia to the side of beleaguered England.

Hitler's reaction was swift and ruthless. On the 6 April 1941 the Nazi Armies invaded Yugoslavia. The capital was bombed and the air force

destroyed, thanks mainly to the treachery of Catholic Croat elements siding with the Nazis.

Many Catholic lay members and clergy, mostly Croats, helped the Nazis and fought against their own Government. This they did in order to set up an independent Catholic State of Croatia once Yugoslav unify had disintegrated. As a reward for their treachery, Hitler granted the Catholic Croats autonomy under Nazi tutelage. While the rest of Yugoslavia was turned into Nazi-occupied territory, Croatia became an independent Catholic State, where the Ustashi leader, Ante Pavelic, assisted by Archbishop Stepinac and blessed by Pope Pius XII, initiated the terrible reign of Ustashi terror.



Left to right: Avro Manhattan, the author, and Dr. Milosh Sekulich. Dr. Sekulich was the first messenger charged by the Orthodox Church of Serbia with bringing the news of the horrors then still being committed by the Ustashi to the knowledge of the Allies.

Having managed to leave Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia (September 1941) he went to Turkey and then to Egypt. From there he made for the Sudan and then into the Congo, and finally to Lagos, Nigeria. After foiling an attempt to keep him there for the duration, he reached Portugal, followed by Ireland, finally reaching London.

There he handed over the Appeals of the Orthodox Church and the first full documentation of the Ustashi crimes and Catholic forcible conversions. After the war Dr. Sekulich, General Mirkovich and the author held a meeting of the surviving victims of the Ustashi in London, England (20 May 1951). Amongst them was a survivor whose whole family and relatives, totaling twenty-five, had been burned alive in a barn near the village of Zijimet. He broke down while recounting the terrible scene he had witnessed. (See text and footnotes.)



Hitler greets the Pope's Ambassador.

The Vatican had been a secret, and at times even an open, if cautious, supporter of Hitler. Hitler had been helped to power by the Catholic Leader of the German Catholic Party, Franz Von Papen. When Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, he made Catholic Von Papen Vice-Chancellor, second in command in Nazi Germany only to Hitler himself.

The German Catholic Party, in fact, by voting for Hitler in 1933, sent Hitler into power. Before and after then, the Vatican cooperated with the Nazis inside and outside Germany. The Catholic Hierarchy sent congratulatory greetings to Hitler and supported him fully. In this picture, there can be seen the Pope's Nuncio as he addresses Hitler by saying (and of course he said it with the permission of the Pope himself), "I have not understood you for a long time. But I have worried for a long time. Today I understand you." This slogan was repeated for many years afterwards by the Vatican.

The poster above urged the people—that is Catholics—to vote for Hitler at the next general elections. Many Catholic clerics supported him during the war, such as Mgr. Tiso, as mentioned elsewhere in this book.

Croatian victims. The first, by magnifying the number of Jewish victims of the Nazi concentration camps; the second by saying that the Croatian victims had never been very many, in fact that they had hardly existed. But just as anti-Semitic forces denied the figure of the Jewish victims of the Nazi concentration camps, to exculpate Nazi

Germany, so did the Vatican follow the same tactic, to exculpate the Catholic Croats and their supporter, the Catholic Church.

Many allies played into the Vatican's hand by helping the minimization of the Croatian atrocities. The most guilty were the American Catholic officers and officials, not to mention the State Department, already working with Pope Pius XII, in preparation for the oncoming Cold War.

The process of "minimization" of the Croatian atrocities, curiously enough, had started long before the end of the war. Indeed, soon after the atrocities were reported to the Allies. The present author, sad to relate, had been one of the earliest culprits. While broadcasting to the partisans of occupied Europe from a secret station in England, he came across a man who had escaped from occupied Europe specifically to report what was happening in Yugoslavia, or rather in that part of Yugoslavia which had not been occupied by Hitler, namely in Croatia. His name was Dr. M. Sekulich, a Serb and a member of the Orthodox Church of Serbia. Dr. Sekulich had managed to go into occupied Greece, thanks to the help of the Orthodox Church of Serbia which had recommended him to members of the Greek Orthodox Church. From there he went to Turkey, and from Turkey to Egypt. The Allies, according to him, then had helped him to sail to England. He had been a firm supporter of Mirkovich who had been accused of having collaborated with the Nazis. The British believed the accusation and then became partially responsible for the execution of Mirkovich by Tito. The accusation, it was later reported, had been made, between others, by Randolph Churchill, the son of Winston Churchill.

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 16

THE CROATIAN HOLOCAUST—INVENTION OR REALITY? THE AMBASSADOR AND THE CARDINAL—THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S FIT OF TEMPER

The antecedents of Dr. Sekulich were somewhat suspicious, to say the least. He had many photos, some of which were later proved to have been authentic, of Croatian atrocities. This was at the beginning of the war in 1942. The horrors of the concentration camps had not been as yet revealed. In fact, it was not generally believed that they existed at all; or if they did, they had been only the inconveniences of detention.

The Croatian photos, therefore, were seen as a crude propaganda device and accepted by most as such. When, after months of doubts, the present author finally suggested to Mr. Hulton of the Hulton Press, a Fleet Street magnate, to have an article about it all in his magazine *World Review*, Mr. Hulton refused, on the grounds that it was all enemy propaganda. It is interesting to note that Mr. Hulton was a Catholic. Catholics, he had implied, could not do such things.

One of his secretaries, a Russian princess, however, insisted that they were genuine. She was a member of the Orthodox Church and cared for the fate of Orthodox believers. During her campaign Hulton fell for the princess, and married her. Dr. Sekulich meanwhile had been lobbying the many allied governments, then resident in London, with some success. When additional proof was given, by additional material brought to London by people who had escaped from Yugoslavia, finally the present author accepted the evidence as authentic, as did many others, including Mr. Hulton himself.

Soon after the war, the present author had made friends with the representative of the Pope in England, Mgr. Godfrey, the Papal Legate. He had met him casually while walking in Wimbledon Commons where they both went regularly for afternoon strolls. Mgr. Godfrey had discussed with the present author the book which he was then writing, *The Vatican in World Politics*. Mgr. Godfrey was most interested in the book and, having a very open mind, even suggested amendments.



From left to right: Terzic S. Budislav, the Rev. V. Maluckov, and the author. Mr. Terzic Budislav fought the Germans, the Communists and the Ustashi from 1941 to 1945. He was the eyewitness of horrifying atrocities by the latter.

In June 1941 the Catholic Ustashi arrived at the small Orthodox villages of Stikada and Guduru, in the district of Gracac. They ordered all the villagers to assemble inside the tiny church of St. Peter, where a Catholic padre would come to baptize them. Once the villagers were inside, the Ustashi closed the door and then tossed petrol bombs through the windows.

The whole congregation, i.e. the entire Orthodox population of the two villages, six hundred men, women and children, were burned alive.

Amongst them relatives of Terzic Budislav, e.g. Milan, aged 50, Mile, 30, Peter, 30, Dane, 30, Lazo, 22, Mile, 60, Mile, 75, Jeka, 22, Vas, 2, Rade, 22 and several young children whose names and ages he cannot remember. The total of his relatives thus massacred, thirty-two.

In the town of Gracac the Ustashi butchered their Orthodox victims in the local butchers shop. This was discovered by the local authorities owing to the rivulets of human blood flowing into the gutter.

When, however, the Croatian massacres were mentioned, he flatly refused to believe they had occurred. Mgr. Godfrey was basically a very honest and devout man. But he was the official representative of the Vatican. Eventually he was made an Archbishop and later became the Cardinal Primate of all England.

Whether Mgr. Godfrey put the reputation of the Vatican before his conscience, or whether he could not accept that his church had connived with the Croatian massacre, was never clear. His, however, had been a reaction which the present author was to

meet again and again with Catholics and others.

With that in view, he went to meetings to encounter many of those who had escaped death in Croatia. Some were badly mutilated, deformed, or had horrific burns all over their bodies. A young man, about 17, had escaped being burnt alive simply because, upon seeing a group of Ustashi coming surreptitiously into his village, he had hidden himself in a nearby ditch. He witnessed a horrific deed. The Ustashi rounded up all his family, shut all the members in a barn full of hay, and then set it alight. Everybody in it was burnt alive.

These were some of the many tales related viva-voce by many of the survivors. Eventually a book concerning the Croatian horrors was compiled by the present author. The British Press ignored it. Catholic pressure worked against any acceptance of the work. Many book shops, including Protestant ones, refused to sell the book. Fear of offending the Catholic interest had already become that great.

The Yugoslav government finally decided to break such a widespread boycott. They bought 2000 copies of the book and gave a copy free to almost every member of the House of Lords, to every member of the House of Commons, and to members of the British government. The book was called *Terror Over Yugoslavia*. Lord Alexander of Hillborough, leader of the opposition in the House of Lords, was horrified. Notwithstanding his advocacy for the Croat cause, he was boycotted by his colleagues, many of whom feared the powerful Catholic and Jewish lobbies.



Cover of the controversial book about the Croatian atrocities, banned by the Yugoslavian Ambassador to London, the same evening the Special Envoy of the Pope was at a reception at the Communist Embassy. The book had previously been distributed by the same Embassy to members of

the House of Commons, and the House of Lords, as well as to members of the British Government. The appearance of the Papal Nuncio there initiated a new policy of cooperation between Communist Yugoslavia and the Vatican.

Notwithstanding, or rather because of the British boycott, the present author and the Leader of the Protestants of Northern Ireland, the Rev. Ian Paisley, then decided to launch the book in Northern Ireland. Curiously enough the Northern Protestants supported the Croatian crusade with enthusiasm. They identified themselves with the Orthodox Serbs who had been exterminated by the Catholic Croats. Because the civil war which was to engulf Northern Ireland had just started, the Irish Republican Army, better known as the IRA, had just started a reign of terror, with bombings and killings, on a scale unprecedented for years.

The Rev. Paisley, the present author, and Dr. Sekulich who also had been invited, had to be protected by armed guards. The meeting took place in the Ulster Hall, the largest hall of Belfast, capital of Northern Ireland. It was packed to capacity, holding over 2,600 people. Almost two thousand copies of the books were sold. Although the hall was packed to capacity and the meeting was supported unanimously with a motion, not one single British newspaper dared to mention the purpose of the gathering, and even less the name of the book. This was another typical example of the corruption of the British media which was under the Catholic influence then, as it has remained ever since.

The most striking and sensational events concerning the vicissitudes of the book was when it was offered to the Archbishop of Canterbury himself. That occurred during the evening of January 2, 1969. The date was a historical one, it being the first time that a Roman Catholic Cardinal had been invited to enter and preach in St. Paul Cathedral since the Reformation. A veritable triumph for the Catholic Church and an additional blow to the disintegrating Protestantism at large.

That evening the Archbishop of Canterbury was solemnly heading a procession to meet Cardinal Heenan, Catholic Primate of England (who had succeeded Cardinal Godfrey whom we mentioned before) inside St. Paul's Cathedral. Although the main Protestant church of England, it now had been filled with Catholic priests and Catholic nuns for the occasion, when the procession came suddenly to a halt half way from the Cathedral's main portals.



The Book *Catholic Terror Today* hurled across St. Paul's Cathedral by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The evening of January 2, 1969 was an historical one, it being the first time that a Roman Catholic Cardinal had been invited to enter and preach in St. Paul's since the Reformation. A veritable triumph for the Catholic Church and a further blow to disintegrating Protestantism at large. That evening the Archbishop of Canterbury was solemnly heading a procession to meet Cardinal Heenan, Primate of England, inside St. Paul's Cathedral, which though the main Protestant Church of England, was nevertheless packed with Catholic priests and nuns, when he came suddenly to a halt. A Londoner, Miss Amy Phillips (above with the author), having stepped from her pew, courteously handed a copy of the present book to the Archbishop. The Archbishop smiled, took the book, graciously thanked the lady, then read the title *Catholic Terror Today*. At such sight "his heavy jaw cracked as if he had masticated an early Christian." Thereupon in a most unecumenical and unepiscopal fit of anger, he hurled the book across the Cathedral, almost hitting a Catholic nun. A few days before a Catholic student, upon noticing the same book in the hands of a fellow student at Queen's University, Belfast, had thrown the book to the ground, jumped upon it and kicked it with uncontrollable rage. An additional demonstration of the intelligent objectivity of the Catholic intelligentsia.

A Londoner, Miss Amy Phillips, having stepped from her pew, courteously handed a copy of the book to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop smiled, took the book, graciously thanked the lady and then, holding his mitre, read the title. After reading the book's title "his heavy jaw cracked as if he had masticated an early Christian." Thereupon, after a moment of stupefaction, in a most unecumenical fit of anger, he hurled the book across the Cathedral. The book hit a couple of Catholic nuns, who made several signs of the cross.

The reactions of the Archbishop of Canterbury and that of the two Catholic nuns were not exceptions. Copies of the book, which some Protestants had managed to have in the library in Scotland, were handed back with most of the pages and the pictures of the Croatian atrocities heavily burned.

A Catholic student, after the Ulster Hall meeting, upon noticing a copy of the book in the hands of a fellow student at Queen's University, Belfast, had seized the book, thrown the book to the ground, jumped upon it and kicked it with uncontrollable rage. An additional demonstration of the intelligent objective of the Catholic Intelligantia, in Ireland, Britain or, for that matter, in the USA.

The evidence of the Croatian atrocities, in short, had become unacceptable. The Catholic Church could not have connived to their happening. That was also the natural reaction of many non-Catholics as well. Yet, the atrocities occurred. The Catholics were shocked more than anybody else because, having associated their church with peace, prayers and forgiveness, they could not associate the same church with horrendous political and racist attitudes. This occurred also in Ireland where Catholics and Protestants had been murdering each other for decades, before, during and after the Second World War; and where the war between the two factions, Northern Irish Protestants and Northern and Southern Catholics, is still raging as ferociously as ever.



From left to right: Sava Durbaba, the author, and Toma Stojisavljević. The 12 April of 1941, the uncle of Toma Stojisavljević, Mile Stojisavljević, who was a Serb Orthodox Member of the Yugoslav Parliament of Belgrade, was arrested by the Ustashi together with two of his Orthodox friends, the Reverend Milosh Mandić, an Orthodox priest, and Dr. Turleica. They massacred all three, without even the excuse of a formal accusation.

On 13 June 1942, the Ustashi executed the father of Sava, Rade Durbaba, in his native village of Bralovci. After which they amused themselves by

torturing Suvu's thirteen year old sister. This they did by choking her, at ever longer intervals, until she was finally strangled. Not content with it, they crushed all her bones to such an extent that most of the girl's members were reduced to almost pulp.

They then cut the tongue of another young woman of the same village, cutting holes in both her cheeks. She was eventually stabbed to death.

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 17

THE AMBASSADOR AND THE POPE'S NUNCIO IN A RED EMBASSY, A VATICAN VICTORY

The Yugoslavian Embassy had supported the disclosure of the book, and the book itself, for many years as a vehicle to make known the Croatian massacres. Because of it, the present author had been welcomed to the Embassy during various national celebrations and during the reception of famous political personalities.

It was during one of these receptions that the present author came face to face with an unexpected surprise. After having been introduced to the new Yugoslavian Ambassador and having discussed with him the need of a new Serbian edition of the book, the Ambassador replied in a somewhat icy tone that such an edition was no longer necessary. Not only the Serbian edition, he added, but even less an English edition. Asked the reason for such a sudden change of policy, the Ambassador explained that it was no longer necessary to expose the Croatian problem. Indeed, he repeated, the exposure would do a lot of harm to Yugoslavian and to international relations.

When the present author pointed out that the Jews, far from ceasing to relate and expose the Nazi massacres of Jews in the German concentration camps, were mounting an ever vigorous campaign, worldwide lest the world forget the Nazi horrors, the Ambassador repeated that the Croatian "problem," as he called it, was somewhat different and no longer needed a reminder.

The attitude of the Ambassador had been so sudden and radical that the present writer realized at once what he had suspected for months; namely that a "rapprochement" between the Vatican and President Tito, a born Catholic, had taken place.

The two, in fact, had been conducting secret negotiations for a long time with the view of solving the problems of the Catholic dissidents inside Communist Yugoslavia, the Catholic clergy who had



Title of the book which the Yugoslav Ambassador to England refused to publish again after Avro Manhattan encountered the Pope's Ambassador in the Yugoslav Embassy.

The Ambassador told the author that such literature was no longer useful. The Croatian massacres, he said, should be forgotten. After the encounter of Avro Manhattan with the new Yugoslav Ambassador and the Pope's Nuncio, Yugoslavia changed her policy and befriended the Vatican. The Croatian horrors were relegated to the background. The Vatican scored another victory. The edition of the book in English, however, continued to sell all over the world and was sought by many as a reminder of the danger of religious fanaticism.

been imprisoned and the Catholic Croats whom Tito had considered "war criminals." They had agreed upon a general amnesty for the lot, including amnesty for those Catholics who had collaborated with the occupying Nazis. The most telling, however, was a general amnesty for the priests, monks and other clergy who had been the backbone of the independent Catholic State of Croatia.

That meant a change in the relationship with the Vatican, at home and abroad. Hence, a prompt minimization of the Croatian atrocities and cooperation with a new "reformed" Croatian Catholicism. A real diplomatic triumph for the Vatican.

The negotiations had been carried out by Mgr. F. Seper who had been appointed Head of the Sacred Congregation for the Faith (formerly the Holy Office of the Inquisition). Mgr. Seper, as already mentioned, had been nominated Archbishop of Zagreb, as a successor of Archbishop Stepinac who also had been the personal friend and associate

of Ante Pavelic, and of Artuckovic, the Interior Minister of the Catholic State of Croatia.

Mgr. Seper, who personally was a very honest and capable man, proved to be an even more subtle negotiator. He convinced the rabid anti-Vatican Communist Tito that a reconciliation with the Vatican would have given Communist Yugoslavia the much-needed support of the USA. The U.S.'s financial help, not to say diplomatic protection, had become a must since Soviet Russia had sinister designs upon a Yugoslavia that had detached herself from the block of Eastern Europe which had been reduced to the state of Russian satellites.

The argument seen in political terms had been a valid one and, therefore, an acceptable one. Tito decided to accept the Vatican's offer. Hence the radical change of policy concerning the Croatian problem. Yugoslavia wished to forget the holocaust and did not wish to be reminded about it, but above all did not wish to annoy the Vatican with even the memory of it.

The present author's surprise encounter with the new Ambassador was soon followed by yet another one when he came face to face with an individual wearing a clerical collar and a violet shirt. An Embassy official thereupon hastened to introduce the present author to the personage. The personage was none other than the new Papal Nuncio to Great Britain, that is the Pope's Ambassador. His name was Monsignor Cardinale. A pleasant individual who, while shaking hands, gave an enigmatic smile that indicated a silent victory. The encounter was the first and also the last, with both the Yugoslavian ambassador and the Papal Nuncio to Great Britain. It was also the author's last invitation to the Embassy.



Cardinal F. Seper was appointed Head of the Sacred Congregation of the Faith by Pope Paul VI in 1968. In this capacity the new Cardinal became responsible for guarding against theological errors, heresies, and other deviations from the teaching of the Catholic Church, one of the Vatican's most important posts. The Sacred Congregation which he led was none

other than the former Holy Office which, in the past, had been responsible for the Holy Inquisition.

The appointment, it must be remembered, took place in 1968, several years after the Second Vatican Council which had promoted Ecumenism and Unity, and during the Pontificate of Pope Paul VI.

Why had Mgr. F. Seper's appointment had such great significance for Catholics and Protestants alike?

Because Cardinal F. Seper was none other than the Archbishop of Zagreb, the capital of the former Ustashi Croatia. He was the man who had succeeded the Archbishop, later Cardinal Stepinac, the friend and associate of Ante Pavelic. Yes, the successor of that same Stepinac who from the same Episcopal See had inspired mass forcible conversions, mass deportations of Orthodox priests and laymen, and who had blessed the Ustashi murderers of more than half a million people.

Soon afterwards the Vatican made an official reconciliation with Marshal Tito. Catholic officials and clergy were released and a policy of reconciliation was initiated which, as hinted earlier, culminated with Mgr. Seper being posted inside the Vatican and being promoted to a Cardinal. Indeed, an adviser to none other than the Pope himself.

Many of the Croats were pleased at the turn of events. But hundreds of thousands of Serbs, who had lost more than 675,000 relatives and friends were not. They continued to hold meetings and have collective and individual reminders to the Croatian Holocaust whenever they could. The relentless Vatican pressure machine, however, continued to roll on until even their most innocent meetings were frowned upon by the police.

Their treatment was the more bitter because it was happening not in Catholic countries, but in Protestant ones; England being the chief culprit. The official encounter of the Archbishop of Canterbury with the Cardinal Primate of England in St. Paul Cathedral having been the beginning of the silent persecution of those who wished to remember the Holocaust of Croatia.

In other countries, however, the Serbians remembered their martyrs unhindered. Although, even there the heavy silent hand of the Catholic Church kept a threatening

watch upon their activities. But if the silent menacing vigilance of the Catholic hierarchies of Australia, Canada and the USA upon the Croatian Holocaust was a discreet one, that of the former Catholic Ustashis was not.

The Ustashis who had escaped to those countries helped by the Catholic Church, now had formed themselves into ethnic groups which had become very active in political, religious and Croatian matters.

They organized themselves into semi-military units. These supported Croatian independence as fiercely as ever and were silently helped by the local Catholic authorities and clergy of the host countries where they had taken refuge. Very often they clashed not only with local Serbian or Yugoslavian activities, but also with local political problems which, in their view, were contrary to Croatian interests.



The author and the Yugoslav Ambassador.

The reception of the Yugoslav Embassy in London, England, became an historical landmark in the relationship of Communist Yugoslavia and the Vatican. Since the end of World War Two, and the collapse of the Independent Catholic State of Croatia, Red Dictator Tito had shunned all contact with the Vatican. The arrest and the imprisonment of Archbishop Stepinac and other high Catholic clergy who had participated in the reign of terror of the Catholic State, became the main obstacle. With the passing of time, however, the independence of Tito, from Soviet Russia, which was encouraged by the USA, yielded results. The USA "pressured" the Red Dictator to "conciliation" with the Vatican. One of the preliminaries of such a step was "to forget the Croatian experience." When such a policy was accepted, a new Ambassador was appointed in London, at the same time that a "special" clever Vatican Diplomat became one of the Embassy's "principal guests." The same evening the author was told by the Ambassador to stop writing about Croatia. Immediately afterwards he was introduced to Mgr. Cardinale, who was at the Red Embassy in person, as

the official representative of the Pope. In the picture the author is addressing the Ambassador during the reception.

To that effect they created terroristic cells all over Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the U.S. In Australia they clashed with local people and inflicted severe damages to the interest of Communist Yugoslavia. To render their protest more effective, they blew up offices, businesses, communist or liberal offices. Bombs and explosions became an ever more recurrent hallmark of their presence.

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 18

USTASHI TERRORISM AFTER WORLD WAR TWO

The Ustashi became specialized in the assassination of prominent people. Yugoslavian diplomats and military attaches were killed. The Yugoslavian ambassador to Sweden was assassinated in the very Embassy itself, in plain daylight. One of the many acts of terrorism which, by then, had become a common hallmark of the activities of the Ustashis abroad.

Minor assassinations, although common, very often were not even mentioned by the world press. One of these was that in which Dr. Sekulich himself had been involved. Dr. Sekulich had been dealing with certain interested parties, who wished for a preliminary formulation of a policy of cooperation between the Serbs and the Croats after the demise of Marshal Tito. Since the dealings had been leaked, and thus had aroused the suspicion of the Ustashis, he and his associates had decided to hold their meeting in Israel.

They chose Israel as the best guarded and secure country where terrorists had minimum chances to carry out their activities. He was mistaken. Having gone on a secret rendezvous in Jerusalem, after only a couple of meetings he found the chief negotiator murdered next door to his own. A shock not only to Dr. Sekulich but also the the Security authorities.

The present author, although never experiencing such a dramatic sample of Ustashi activities, nevertheless had a taste of it; appropriately in Chicago, of all cities.

In 1978, he had flown from Los Angeles to Chicago to attend a convention organized by the Serbs of the USA. He had been invited there to deliver a speech and to promote a book which had just been published in the USA, entitled *The Vatican Moscow Alliance*. As soon as he arrived in Chicago he was ushered into a hall where there was a meeting taking place and a speaker was there delivering a speech. When some people in the crowd recognized the present author, he was asked to climb the rostrum and say a few words. This was done. Soon afterwards, however, not a few of those present came to give a warning. "Please do not accept such invitations unless planned beforehand," he was told.

The warning had been motivated by the fact that, a few months before, a writer who had delivered a speech from that same rostrum had been shot to death while speaking. A niece of his in the audience, who had gone up to the platform to help him, also had been shot. "Don't accept impromptu invitations unless checked by the committee," he was warned.

Two days later there took place a large meeting just on the outskirts of Chicago. The meeting was postponed for almost an hour because of the absence of the main organizer. The latter finally arrived in a taxi. He explained the cause of his delay; a bomb had been found under his Cadillac and had to be defused by the police.

From the very beginning a tough individual started to shadow the present writer, walking wherever he went, shoulder to shoulder. The individual became so noxious that finally he was asked to leave. He refused. When asked if he was a cameramen or a television technician, he refused to answer. Finally, when pressed by a functionary of the convention, he opened a bulky leather case hanging from his shoulder, and there appeared a large German revolver. He made the revolver rotate to show the bullets seemingly coated with brass. He then explained decisively that he was appointed the present writer's bodyguard for the remainder of the convention.

There was a luncheon during which other tough individuals hovered upon the guests like menacing angels of silent surveillance, after the luncheon speeches began. These were delivered from a large empty stage, upon which there was a single rostrum and a microphone. The stage was darkened and the speaker was lit by a single light beam, addressing the large audience in semi-darkness.

Various speakers participated. Amongst these, various Orthodox and Serbian Bishops. The speaker preceding the present writer was one Adams, who had just written a large book about the life of the Serbs' hero, General Mirkovich. Mr. Adams was a security official of the Senate House in Washington. To the present writer's opinion he said certain things which had been totally inaccurate; certain events which he mentioned had been distorted. The present writer had been implicated during the war, since he had been dealing with the partisans in occupied Europe, amongst these the partisans of Yugoslavia. Certain Catholic clergy had played a noxious role which had resulted in the arrest and execution of many individuals. That meant, of course, on the part of the Ustashis.

When the present author finally reached the rostrum, he thanked Mr. Adams for the information but said that he had been inaccurate, or at least he had minimized certain facts, including the cooperation of the Catholic clergy with the Ustashi and cognate

events.

After having pointed out that and other events, however, the present author told the audience, which was composed of Serbs, most of whom had fled to the USA because they had been terrorized by the Ustashi, that while they should never forget the Croatian Holocaust, they should forgive. And indeed, they should look to the future as citizens of the USA, a country which had welcomed them and given them security and peace.

The audience rose and gave the present author a standing ovation. The performance had been even more impressive because amongst the audience were four members of the House of Representatives and a couple of Senators who had come expressly from Washington to attend the convention. No doubt, to nurse the Serbian vote of the USA. Afterwards, while surrounded by a large circle of people expressing their appreciation of the speech, many pointed out that the author's advocacy of the right of Catholic Croatia to exist as an ethnic, religious and cultural identity was a risky thing to say to the Serbs. (The author, in fact, had repeated that several times, saying that both Serbia and Croatia could exist notwithstanding their different religious credos and could cooperate in building a new Yugoslavia.) An individual who had been standing alone in the distance suddenly opened a passage through the crowd, came straight to the author and shook him by the hand with such strength that the present author had to bend his hand to avoid a painful stricture.

The man, a tough guy looking like a professional boxer, was brief, abrupt and to the point. "It is people like you that we need in this country," he said. "Great pity that you are not an American, great pity." With that, the man departed. The crowd seemed impressed. Then they disclosed the identity of the speaker. He was one of the leaders of the Senate. But if his comments had been gratifying, the next encounter, half an hour later, was not. After the crowd had dispersed and many had bought a copy of the book, signed by the author, the present writer was having a drink standing at the bar, when he noticed a man wearing a hat whose brim hid his eyes. He had been observing, pretending to drink. After a while, when the present author was alone, he approached him with an almost feline smoothness. After a few seconds he whispered a few words as he looked at the other side of the bar. "I came to the convention to kill you. Lucky that you said what you did." The individual had whispered these words with such a matter-of-fact and unemotional tone of voice that it had sounded unreal. He kept a hand, the right hand, under his jacket and had looked significantly at the bulk under it. Then, as people were coming towards us, he asked the present author for a copy of the book, complete with autograph, which he bought. Thereupon having given a courteous greeting, he departed.

The bodyguard, who had absented himself, when told of the incident, froze. "He is one of the most ruthless Usthasi killers," he commented. I kept him under surveillance all the time. The present author returned to Los Angeles having experienced a matter-of-fact encounter, a personal Ustashi reality.[1]

Footnote

1. See FBI file, Ethnical Political Activities, 1978; also CIA's Serbian Convention in Chicago, 1978; also Chicago Police, specialized surveillance of ethnical groups.

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 19

FORTY YEARS AFTER—CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The Vatican, and with it the Catholic Church, after the disappearance of the Catholic State of Croatia, never claimed any responsibility, not even a partial one, for the atrocities committed there. Indeed, when accused, they disclaimed any connection with the whole Croatian "experiment."

When asked to express their abhorrence for the deeds committed by the Ustashis of Catholic Croatia, they both kept their silence. Silence means approval. That is why, since the downfall of Independent Croatia, the Catholic Church has constantly helped the scattered remnants of the Ustashi at home and abroad. Not only during the pontificate of Pius XII, but equally during those of "good Pope John XXIII" and Pope Paul VI.

Catholic laymen, Catholic priests and Catholic monks continued to back the Ustashi as actively as ever. Underground organizations were formed in many parts of the world. Ustashi secret headquarters were set up, e.g. in Madrid, Spain, where incidentally A. Pavelic had installed himself following his attempted assassination in the Argentine. Indeed, while Pius XII was still alive, another no less active centre sprang up in Rome itself.

Simultaneous to all this, Catholic clergy within Croatia exerted themselves as relentlessly as their companions abroad. As typified by a group of nine of them arrested in Osjek, Northern Croatia, and tried in March 1960. While two of them were theological students the other seven were Catholic padres led by Father Ciril Koss and Father Ivan Kopic.

In 1964, the Brotherhood of the Cross, a Catholic Croatian organization in West Germany, was dissolved on the orders of the German Government, after a bomb attack in that country. Its leader? Father Madic Skoko, a Catholic priest. Following a three months long trial the Germans condemned him to four years hard labour.

In 1965, the Ustashi became so blatantly active in Australia, where they terrorized fellow Catholics into supporting their activities that the Australian Government had to take drastic measures against them. Similar cases occurred in other countries, e.g. in the

USA where bombs were made to explode simultaneously in sundry localities in 1967.

These were not the sporadic exertions of desperados. But the coordinated activities of the Ustashi waiting for "The Day."

One of their headquarters, which after the Second World War had been set up in Rome in 1960, was transferred to the Croatian capital itself, Zagreb. This, it must be remembered, during the pontificate of Pope John XXIII (1958-1963), the father of Ecumenism.

The Ustashi correspondence, documents and instructions, significantly enough, were found hidden inside the walls of the Franciscan monastery of that city. The Ustashi leader? A Franciscan monk, Father Rudi Jerak, who had been recruiting members while giving them religious instruction. Father Jerak was arrested, with fourteen other Catholics who were running terroristic organizations "with the aim of creating a separate State of Croatia"[\[1\]](#)

In 1966, the new socialist, Pope Paul VI (1963-1978), as we have already seen, promoted Mgr. Seper, Cardinal. Seper became Head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. His department became responsible for guarding against "theological errors."

Cardinal Seper, it must be remembered, was the successor of Archbishop Stepinac of Zagreb.

The silent but effective protection of the Vatican for the scattered Ustashi continued uninterrupted from the downfall of Ustashi Croatia. Polish Pope, John Paul II, globe trotting the world with clamorous demands for "respect and observance of human rights." like his papal predecessors, never mentioned or condemned the Ustashi atrocities.

The thousands of Ustashi who fled to various countries, helped by the Vatican itself, once settled in their host lands were protected, ipso facto, by the local Catholic clergy. The local clergy and their lay associates, that is Catholic laymen, then set out to see that the Ustashi were protected, not only by absconding themselves within the local population but, above all, under an umbrella of legalized protection.

This was made possible by the passing of legislation which could impede the arrest or the extradition of what was termed "war criminals" wanted either by Yugoslavia, or by the Allied war tribunals. The legislation was inspired and often successfully carried out

by Catholic bodies and associated Catholic politicians on a regional and even national level. The campaign was particularly effective in Australia, Canada and the USA. The Catholic Church, having provided a legislative umbrella, then helped the "Ustashi refugees" financially, with jobs and with a prudent integration into their new community.

Many managed to be integrated and vanished. New identities or legalized camouflages helped with their absorption into the community. During the first few years their integration went smoothly. Then, however, as their true identity became known steps were taken, either by the authorities in Europe or those in the countries of their adoption, to bring them to justice; even to extradite them to the localities of their crimes.

Several were arrested and suffered expulsion, some appeared before tribunals. Most of them, however, protected as they were by the Catholic Church, managed to escape the legal net. This was done not only by minor former Ustashis, but equally by major ones.

The most notorious case was that of Andrija Artukovic, Croatian Minister of the Interior and later Minister of Justice.

In the Croatian Cabinet, he was the spokesman for Archbishop Stepinac. Artukovic was born in Croatia and was educated in Franciscan schools. He studied law at the University of Zagreb, where he became a fanatical advocate of the Catholicity and independence of a self-governing Catholic Croatia.

After the Croatian Government collapsed, when Tito partisans joined the Soviet armies, Artukovic, like thousands of other Ustashi, fled the country, helped by Catholic clergy. They lived in adjacent countries, mostly in Switzerland, Austria, and also in Catholic Ireland.

Many reached the shore of the USA. Artukovic went to the USA in July 1948, under a visitor's visa issued to him in the name of Aloys Anich. The visa and other documents were obtained via the Catholic organizations at the Vatican and in the USA. The Knights of Columbus helped, since Artukovic became a Knight of Columbus.

In 1949, Artukovic applied for residence status under the Displaced Person Act. In March 1951, however, the Yugoslav Government made a formal demand that Artukovic be returned for prosecution "as a war criminal." Immediately, the whole of the Catholic machinery in the USA was set in motion to protect Artukovic.

How did Artukovic manage to flee Catholic Croatia after its collapse?

Artukovic like Pavelic took refuge in Italy, hiding in various monasteries and residing even in Rome. Under the direct protection of the Vatican, he was supplied with false documents and went to Catholic Ireland where the vigilant Catholic hierarchs looked after him. They provided him with other false documents which allowed him into the USA where Catholic Irish officials saw to it that he was welcomed, settled and protected.

The Catholic protective umbrella, however, did not prevent his identity from becoming known. The result was that proceedings were taken, with the view of his arrest by the USA as a war criminal.

The Catholic authorities, however, with the aid of lay Catholic legal organizations, managed to pass certain legislative measures on a local and national level, as already indicated, which protected him from arrest.

When steps were taken for his extradition, these also were nullified, by legal, semi-legal and equivocal or conflicting legal quibbles, which rendered him practically immune.

The protection of the Catholic Church of America seemed impregnable. This was demonstrated by the fact that it took the USA and Yugoslavia decades to have Artukovic extradited from the USA.

Artukovic lived peacefully for over 40 years in the U.S. and was finally extradited from there in February 1986 after a legal battle which lasted well over 30 long years. A sombre spectacle of the tremendous power of the Catholic Church in America.

Brought before a court in Zagreb, frail and haggard, the former Interior Minister, known as the Balkans Butcher, was pronounced guilty of war crimes and sentenced to death.

Throughout the four weeks trial he pled his innocence. Artukovic was convicted of four specific crimes, including the murder of civilians and prisoners of war.

The authorities, and above all the Catholic press world wide, beginning with the USA media, emphasized that he was convicted of "the mass murder of Jews, Gypsies, and others." Some specified "and of Serbs."

The distortion of the specific racial-sectarian motive, which had motivated the Catholic lay and clerical authorities for conniving with the Ustashi massacre of almost 700,000 Orthodox Serbs, would be incredible had it not happened.

The American mass media never mentioned the religious motivation, plus the racial one, which had inspired the Croatian massacre. The Catholic Church was never blamed, or even mentioned as having had any part in the Croatian affair. Not a word of condemnation, criticism or even impartial reminder of her responsibility.

The State Department saw to it that it should be so. Since, by then, the USA and the Vatican had exchanged ambassadors, and the Papal Ambassador in Washington had seen to it that the Catholic mass media of the USA be briefed about what to say.

The emphasis of the media was that Artukovic had been sentenced to death because of the mass murder of Jews and Gypsies and, as if by chance, also of Serbs. The fact that the mass murder had been of Serbs and of Orthodox Serbs, was never even given a hint. This exculpated the Catholic Church. Indeed, to millions, the Vatican and the Church had nothing to do with the massacre whatsoever!

To render the sentence more convincing, and to make it appear as having nothing to do with Catholic religious persecution, the court of Zagreb, which had previously discussed the whole trial with the USA and the Vatican authorities, then accused Artukovic of ordering "a massacre of civilians in 1942, the murder of 450 civilian deportees on the road to a concentration camp, the murder of a prominent lawyer in 1941, and the killing of captured Yugoslav partisans in 1943" (Reuter reports)[\[2\]](#)

Not a word or even a hint of the religious nature of the massacre, or of the fact that Catholic padres and monks had been in charge of concentration camps where hundreds of thousands had been tortured and murdered, or had been forced to accept Catholic baptism to save themselves from torture or execution.



Andrija Artakovic, led from the Court of Zagreb, after being sentenced to death, 14 May 1986, for war crimes in Yugoslavia.

This was the general captions of the World Press after Artukovic's

sentence; not a word indicating the kind of war crimes which he committed. In fact, in many articles dealing with the four weeks court trials, the Catholic Church was hardly mentioned.

The particular sectarian character, and anti-Orthodox nature of the Croatian massacres, were never indicated, with rare exceptions, by either the British or the American media. Indeed, the Vatican had managed to exert such censorship about the whole affair that the emphasis of the world media was that Artukovic had been responsible for the death of a few hundred Jews, Gypsies, and a few Serbs.

Unlike the Holocaust, which the Jewish community is rightly mentioning daily for the world to remember, the Catholic Holocaust has been not only forgotten, it has become an unmentionable subject. A taboo word. Most of the Protestants have contributed, with the Vatican, to make the world forget the atrocities of Catholic Croatia.

In short, Artukovic had been a minor war criminal who had executed a few hundred civilians simply for military or political motivation. Religion had been totally omitted. Indeed, had not even been mentioned. A proof if there needed to be one of the tacit concordance reached between the Vatican, the USA and the communist authorities of Yugoslavia long before the trial itself.

But the mendacity of the nature of the trial became even more glaring, by the fact concerning the omission of the proportionally immense massacre of the Orthodox Serbs during the Croatian Regime.

During the trial not only was the Catholic Church never mentioned; there had been not even a single hint concerning the horrendous reality that, hidden behind that general over-simplification—namely that those who had been murdered had been mainly Jews and Gypsies, adding as an additional item "and Serbs" to the other no less horrendous reality that "and Serbs" meant ninety-nine percent of the total victims, most of them belonging to the Orthodox Church. Also the fact that the Serbs had been made to perish because they belonged to a Church, which the Catholic State of Croatia had considered inimical to the Catholic Church, and to the plan of the Vatican, which had connived the birth of the Croatian State itself.

During the Zagreb trial of Artukovic, the world press never dared to mention these

facts. The collective silence of the European and American media would be incredible, had it not been a sad reality that most of it had been silenced by fear of the reaction of the Catholic Church of the USA, whose silent pressure had been felt in the editorial offices of newspaper and TV stations.

The trial which was concluded in May 1986 thus seemed to have closed a chapter of history, one of planned genocide and, perhaps even worse, of religious persecution carried out with the connivance of the Vatican, which had protected those who had acted as the instruments of the horrendous Croatian experience.[\[3\]](#)

The Vatican had not only been exculpated from its participation in the whole affair, it was not even mentioned. Indeed, the Catholic Church, whose exertions had loomed so prominently in the Catholic concentration camps, was made to look like a helpless witness: indirectly some organs of the American media had gone so far as to hint that it had helped the victims of Croat Nazism.

The Protestants of the USA, with few exceptions, acted likewise. Their cowardice, plus the Catholic operational energy, and the collaboration of the American media, had all contributed to the distortion of the historical truth.

When a whole nation is deliberately kept in total ignorance of certain horrendous historical facts, that nation is endangered. In our case, the obliteration of the fact that the Vatican had so prominently participated in the creation of the Catholic State of Croatia. A crime against the right of the American people to be informed.

The rabid nationalism, and the ferocious religious dogmatism which created Catholic Croatia one day might be resurrected anew. Not only in Europe, but also in other parts of the world, including the Western Hemisphere, indeed, including the USA itself.

An omen. And a warning.

Footnotes

1. *The Times*, London, March 30, 1960. [\[Back\]](#)
2. *The Times*, London, May 16, 1986. [\[Back\]](#)
3. Reports from Belgrade May 14, 15, 1986. [\[Back\]](#)

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 20

THE VIRGIN MARY AND THE SECRETARY OF THE USA NAVY CALL FOR WORLD WAR III

Forty years before the trial of the 86 year old Croatian Minister of the Interior, in a Zagreb court which pronounced him guilty of war crimes, and had him sentenced to death, the possible outbreak of a Third World War had been not only envisaged, it had become also a certainty. Indeed, it had been considered a blessing by Artukovic, Ante Pavelic, all their Ustashi battalions, by Archbishop Stepinac, by Cardinal Mindzenty, and by certain experts. It had been expected with no less eagerness in certain quarters of the USA, and by the highest authority at the Vatican, the Pope himself.

Pope Pius XII, diplomatic and political arch-intriguer, was a firm believer in its inevitability. More than that, he conditioned millions of Catholics to accept it as such. Indeed, to welcome it as an instrument for the propagation of the power of the Catholic Church.

He justified it on the assumption that the Virgin Mary was his ally. Since in 1917, the year of the Russian Revolution, she had appeared to three illiterate children in Fatima, a desolate locality in Portugal.

Her apparition had been accompanied by a somewhat strange *miracle*:

The sun became pale, three times it turned speedily on itself, like a Catherine wheel... At the end of these convulsive revolutions it seemed to jump out of its orbit and come forward towards the people on a zig-zag course, stopped, and returned again to its normal position.

This was seen by a large crowd near the children and "lasted twelve minutes." [\[1\]](#)



The Fatima Cult derived from the alleged appearance of the Virgin Mary to three sickly children at Fatima, Portugal, in 1917.

Following the appearance of Bolshevik Russia and World Communism between the First and Second World Wars, the Cult was soon transformed into an ideological crusade.

The Virgin's prophecy that Bolshevik Russia, unless annihilated, would bring destruction to all nations became a powerful religious and ideological weapon in the armory of the Catholic Church and her political allies; this particularly during the rise of Hitler, who preached exactly the same doctrine.

The Fatima Cult, with its anti-Russian message, was magnified by Pope Pius XII, who gave it a new impetus when Russia was attacked by Hitler in 1941.

After the War, Pius XII used it in his conduct of the Cold War. Monster pilgrimages, totaling one million people each, were organized to the Fatima Shrine. The Pope used to send his own Papal Legate to give official sanction to the political message of the Virgin Mary.

The fact that the other two thousand million human beings in the world never noticed the sun agitate, rotate and jump out of its orbit did not bother the Catholic Church in the least.

On the contrary, the Catholic masses were told to believe that the sun, on the appearance of the Virgin Mary, had truly moved on "a zig-zag course" as proof of the authenticity of her presence. And, of course, of "her messages."

The Virgin's messages had been to induce the Pope to bring about "the consecration of the World to her immaculate heart," to be followed by "the consecration of Russia." "Russia will be converted," she foretold. "The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me." But, she warned, should this not be accomplished "her (Russia's) errors will spread throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions... different nations will be destroyed..." In the end, however, the Virgin promised, by way of consolation, that the Catholic Church would triumph, after which "the Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me." Thereupon "she (Russia) shall be converted and a period of peace will be granted to the world."

These quotations are from the authenticated messages of the Virgin Mary herself, as related to one of the children and fully accepted by the Catholic Church as a genuine revelation by the Mother of God.[\[2\]](#)

Within a few years the Cult of Fatima had grown to great proportions. The number of pilgrims multiplied from sixty on June 13, 1917 to sixty thousand in October of that same year. From 144,000 in 1923 to 588,000 in 1928. The total for six years: two million.[\[3\]](#)

The Vatican took the promises seriously. Mgr. Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, then the grey eminence behind Pope Pius XI, sponsored a policy supporting Fascism in Italy and then the Nazis in Germany, to help the prophecy come true. To such an extent that he was the chief instrument in helping Hitler to get into power. This he did by urging the German Catholic Party to vote for Hitler at the last German general election in 1933.[\[4\]](#)

The basic idea was a simple one. Fascism and Nazism, besides smashing the Communists in Europe, ultimately would smash Communist Russia. In 1929 Pope Pius XI signed a Concordat and the Lateran Treaty with Mussolini and called him "the man sent by Providence." In 1933 Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. In 1936 Franco started the Civil War. By 1938 two-thirds of Europe had been Fascistized and the rumblings of the Second World War were heard more and more ominously everywhere.

Concurrently, however, Europe had also been Fatimaized. The Cult of Fatima, with emphasis on the Virgin's promise of Russia's conversion, having been given immense prominence by the Vatican.

In 1938 a Papal Nuncio was sent to Fatima, and almost half a million pilgrims were told that the Virgin had confided three great secrets to the children. Thereupon, in June of that year, the only surviving child—advised by her confessor, always in touch with the

Hierarchy and hence with the Vatican—revealed the contents of two of the three great secrets.

The first was the vision of Hell. (Something well known to the modern world.)

The second was more to the point: a reiteration that Soviet Russia would be converted to the Catholic Church.

The third was given, sealed in an envelope, and put in the custody of the ecclesiastical authority, not to be revealed until 1960.

The dramatic reiteration of the revelation of the second secret about Soviet Russia immediately assumed a tremendous religious and political significance. The timing of the "disclosure" could not have been better chosen. The Fascist Dictatorships were talking the same language: the annihilation of Soviet Russia.

The following year, 1939, the Second World War broke out. In 1940 France was defeated. The whole of Europe had become Fascist. In 1941 Hitler invaded Russia. The Virgin's prophecy at long last was about to be fulfilled. At the Vatican there was rejoicing. Since by now Pacelli had become Pope under the name of Pius XII (1939).

Pius XII encouraged Catholics to volunteer for the Russian front. Catholics—most of them devotees of the Virgin of Fatima—joined the Nazi armies from Italy, France, Ireland, Belgium, Holland, Latin America, the USA and Portugal. Spain sent a Catholic Blue Division.

In October 1941, while the Nazi armies rolled near Moscow, Pius XII, addressing Portugal, urged Catholics to pray for a speedy realization of the Lady of Fatima's promise.

The following year, 1942, after Hitler had declared that Communist Russia had been "definitely" defeated, Pius XII, in a Jubilee Message, fulfilled the first of the Virgin's injunctions and "consecrated the whole World to her Immaculate Heart." "The apparitions of Fatima open a new era," wrote Cardinal Cerejeira in that same year. "It is the foreshadowing of what the Immaculate Heart of Mary is preparing for the whole World." The new era, in 1942, was a totally Nazified European Continent, with Russia seemingly wiped off the map, Japan conquering half of Asia, and World Fascism at its zenith everywhere.

The Fascist Empire vanished with the collapse of Hitler. In 1945, the Second World

War ended. And Soviet Russia, to the chagrined surprise of Pope Pius XII, emerged the second greatest power on Earth.

The Cult of Fatima, which had suffered a devotional recess with the defeat of the Nazi armies, now, with the suicide of Hitler, was suddenly revived. And in October 1945 the Vatican ordered that monster pilgrimages be organized to the Shrine.

In 1946, our Lady was solemnly crowned before half a million pilgrims. The Crown, weighing 1,200 grams of gold, had 313 pearls, 1250 precious stones and 1400 diamonds. Pope Pius XII from the Vatican addressed the pilgrims by radio, saying that our Lady's promises would be fulfilled. "Be ready!" he warned. "There can be no neutrals. Never step back. Line up as crusaders"[\[5\]](#)

In 1947 the Cold War began. Hatred against Communist Russia was promoted, headed by the Vatican which sent a statue of our Lady of Fatima, with her "message" on a "pilgrimage" around the world. She was sent from country to country to arouse anti-Russian odium. Whole Governments welcomed her. Within a few years, as the Cold War mounted, the statue had gone to Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas and Australia and had visited fifty-three nations. The East-West split continued to widen.

In 1948 the frightful American-Russian atomic race started. In 1949 Pius XII, to strengthen the anti-Russian front, excommunicated any voter supporting the Communists. And soon afterwards American theologians told the USA that it was her duty to use atom bombs[\[6\]](#)

The following year, in 1950, the "pilgrim statue" of our Lady of Fatima, who had started to travel in 1947, the very year of the outbreak of the Cold War, was sent by airplane, accompanied by Father Arthur Brassard, on the direct instructions of Pope Pius XII... Where? To Moscow. There, with the warm approval of Admiral Kirk, the American Ambassador, she was solemnly placed in the Church of the foreign diplomats. For what specific reason? "To wait for the imminent liberation of Soviet Russia."

Not content with this, Our Lady appeared in person fifteen times to a nun in the Philippines. She repeated her warning against communism. After which a shower of rose petals fell at the nun's feet. An American Jesuit took the miraculous petals to the USA, to revive the energy of fanatical Catholics, headed by the criminal Senator McCarthy and many of his supporters.[\[7\]](#)

American warmongers, led by prominent Catholics, were meanwhile feverishly

preparing for an atomic showdown with Russia. Top Catholics in the most responsible positions were talking of nothing else. On August 6th, 1949, Catholic MacGrath, Attorney General, addressing the Catholic "storm troopers" of the USA—namely the Knights of Columbus—at their convention in Portland, Oregon, urged Catholics "to rise up and put on the armour of the Church militant in the battle to save Christianity." (Christianity, of course, meaning for a Catholic the Catholic Church.) He further urged "a bold offensive."

In that same year another Catholic, one of the most highly placed personages of the U.S. Government, James Forrestal, the main crusader against communism at home and abroad, helped Pope Pius XII to win the elections in Italy by sending American money. Plus money from his own pocket.

James Forrestal, who was in very frequent contact with the Vatican and with Cardinal Spellman, knew better than anybody else what was going on in certain Catholic and American quarters. For one simple reason: he was none other than the American Secretary for Defense.

One day, upon hearing a civil aircraft overhead, he dashed along a Washington street with a most fateful message: "The Russians have invaded us!" he shouted. Later on, notwithstanding the assurance of Pius XII that the Russians would be defeated with the help of Our Lady, Catholic James Forrestal, American Secretary of Defense,



James Forrestal, USA Secretary of Defense, a loyal and selfless American, was one of the most tragic highly placed victims of the Cold War.

Stalin's ruthless intransigence and the West's fear of communism were skillfully exploited by Pope Pius XII, who permeated the mounting Russian-American antagonism with a spiritual and ideological mystique.

This he did with the use of religion and the unscrupulous promotion of the Fatima Cult. The Cult's paramount prophecy: Orthodox Russia would become Catholic. The prophecy's fulfillment implied the military invasion and occupation by the West of Russia.

J. Forrestal, methodically briefed by the Vatican on the Communist menace, became so convinced of the inevitability of a USA-Russian atomic showdown that he even helped Pius XII to win the elections in 1948-9 by contributing funds from his own salary to the Italian Catholics.

One day he dashed along a Washington street, shouting that the Russian armies had landed in the capital. During the night of 21-22 May, 1949, he jumped from a window on the 16th floor of the Bethesda Naval Hospital and was killed instantly.

jumped from a window on the 16th floor of a building in the American Capitol, yelling that the Russians had better be destroyed before it was too late.[\[8\]](#)

The following year another fanatical Catholic was appointed to another important post. Mr. Francis Matthews was nominated Secretary of the American Navy. On the morning he took the oath of office (in June 1949) Mr. Matthews, his wife and all their six children contritely heard Mass and received Holy Communion in the chapel of the Naval station in Washington.

A few months afterwards (October 1949) Cardinal Spellman was summoned to Rome by the Pope, with whom he had repeated and prolonged private sessions. Although giving rise to sharp speculation, they remained a well guarded secret.

The new Catholic Secretary of the U.S. Navy, strangely enough, soon afterwards began unusually active contacts with other prominent American Catholics. Among these, Father Walsh, Jesuit Vice President of Georgetown University; Cardinal Spellman; the Head of the American Legion; the leaders of the Catholic War Veterans. And with Senator McCarthy, the arch-criminal Senator who, upon the advice of a Catholic priest, was just beginning his infamous campaign which was to half paralyze the USA for some years to come. The Catholic Press began a nationwide campaign of psychological warfare. Open hints of a quick atomic war were given once more.

The culmination of all these activities was a speech delivered in Boston on the 25th

August 1950 by Mr. F. Matthews. The arch-Catholic Secretary of the U.S. Navy, the spokesman of certain forces in the States and in the Vatican, called upon the USA to launch an attack upon Soviet Russia in order to make the American people "the first aggressors for peace." "As the initiators of a war of aggression," he added, "it would win for us a proud and popular title: we would become the first aggressors for peace."

The speech created a sensation, both in the USA and in Europe. France declared that she "would not take part in any aggressive war... since a preventive war would liberate nothing but the ruins and the graveyards of our civilization."[\[9\]](#)

Britain sent an even sharper protest.

While the people of the World shuddered at the monstrous proposal, George Craig of the American Legion declared (August 1950) that, yes, the USA should start World War III "on our own terms" and be ready when the signal could be given "for our bombers to wing towards Moscow."

The fact that the advocacy of a "preventive atomic war" was first enunciated by a Catholic was no mere coincidence. For Mr. Matthews, the head of the most important branch of the American armed forces, the American Navy, the largest naval war instrument in the world, had become the mouthpiece of his spiritual master, Pope Pius XII.

Arch-Catholic Matthews was not only the frequent ring kisser of the members of the Catholic Hierarchy in America. He was one of the most active promoters of Catholicism in action in the USA. In addition to which, this super-Catholic Secretary of the American Navy was the Chairman of the National Catholic Community Service and, more sinister still, the Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus,[\[10\]](#) the shock troops of Catholic power in the USA. And, last but not least, a *secret* Privy Chamberlain of Pope Pius XII.

The Catholic Hierarchy, the Catholic Press, the Knights of Columbus all supported Matthews' advocacy of a preventive atomic war. Jesuit Father Walsh, the foremost Catholic authority in the USA and a former Vatican Agent in Russia (1925), told the American people that "President Truman would be morally justified to take defensive measures proportionate to the danger." Which, of course, meant the use of the atom bomb.[\[11\]](#)

When the USA went ahead with the manufacture of the hydrogen bomb, even the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Senator Brian MacMahon, shrank in

horror at the prospect of the sure massacre of fifty million people with such a monster weapon.[\[12\]](#)

Yet Catholics approved of its use. Father Connell declared that the use of the hydrogen bomb by the USA was justified, because "the Communists could utilize their large armed forces...to weaken the defenders of human rights."

Advocacy of a preventive atomic war by a Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus—i.e. Mr. Matthews—assumed horrifying significance when it was remembered that the Secretary of the US Navy's war speech did not come as a surprise to certain selected Catholic leaders or, even less, to the Vatican.

How was that?

Simply that Mr. Matthews had disclosed the contents of his Boston speech to top Catholics prior to its delivery. In fact, *days before* it was delivered. Chief among these Catholics were top people and the head of the USA Catholic Hierarchy, Cardinal Spellman.

Now, it must be remembered that Cardinal Spellman was in *continuous* personal contact with Pope Pius XII, whose intimate friend and personal adviser in political matters he had been since the Second World War. Cardinal Spellman, moreover, was the counselor and personal friend of most of the influential military leaders of America. So that whatever of importance was known at the "Little Vatican" in New York, as Cardinal Spellman's residence was called, was instantly known at the Vatican in Rome, and vice-versa.

Pope Pius XII had been kept well informed about the whole process long before Matthew's Boston speech. Indeed, the evidence is that he was one of its main tacit instigators. The continuous visits at this time of top USA military leaders to the Pope (five in one day), the frequent secret audiences with Spellman, the unofficial contacts with the Knights of Columbia, all indicated that Pius XII knew very well what was afoot.[\[13\]](#)

A few years later, in a hate crusade speech broadcast simultaneously in twenty-seven major languages by the world's main radio stations, Pius XII reiterated "the morality... of a defensive war" (that is, of an atom and hydrogen war), calling for, as the *London Times* somberly described it, "what almost amounts to a crusade of Christendom" and what the *Manchester Guardian* bluntly called "The Pope's blessing for a preventive war."[\[14\]](#)

Ante Pavelic, Archbishop Stepinac (whom Pius had promoted Cardinal) and all the Ustashi battalions, at such papal war cry, made ready. This time they would not lose. Since their Protector Pope Pius XII had now allied himself, instead of to Hitler, to a new supporter and partner: the mightiest nation on earth, the victorious United States of America.

Footnotes

1. Description by the Jesuit Father, H.S. De Caires, authorized by the Archbishop of Dublin, 1946.[\[Back\]](#)
2. Description by the Jesuit Father, H.S. De Caires, authorized by the Archbishop of Dublin, 1946. *Fatima*, Catholic Truth Society of Ireland.[\[Back\]](#)
3. See *Fatima*, Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, 1950.[\[Back\]](#)
4. For more details of the Papal Nuncio Pacelli's role in helping Hitler to power, see the author's *The Vatican in World Politics*, 444 pp., Horizon Press, New York.[\[Back\]](#)
5. Pius XII, in a broadcast to the Pilgrims of Fatima, 13th May, 1946.[\[Back\]](#)
6. Father Edmund Walsh, Vice President of Georgetown University.[\[Back\]](#)
7. Father Ray Goggin, Jesuit. See Philippine Press of the period. Also obtuse, *The Universe*, April 21st, 1950.[\[Back\]](#)
8. The Bethesda Naval Hospital, May 1949.[\[Back\]](#)
9. *The Times*, London, 28th August, 1951.[\[Back\]](#)
10. Whose assets in the USA alone in the sixties were assessed at over \$200,000,000. See *The Vatican Billions* by Manhattan.[\[Back\]](#)
11. Washington Star, and reprinted in book form by Father Walsh in *Total Empire*, Bruce, 1951, Chapter on Atom Bombs and the Christian Conscience. [\[Back\]](#)
12. *The Times*, London, 2nd February 1951.[\[Back\]](#)

13. See the author's *Vatican Imperialism in the 20th Century*, Lyle Stuart, New York, 1966. Chapter: Papal promotion of Contemporary Religious Supersititions for political purposes. [\[Back\]](#)

14. See *The Times*, London, 24th December 1956. Also *New York Times*; *Manchester Guardian*, 27th December 1956; *Time*, 7th January 1957.[\[Back\]](#)

Editor's Note

1917 was the 400th anniversary of the blessed Reformation and should have been a great celebration throughout the world. WW I torpedoed all that!

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 21

THE GRAND CENTRAL EUROPEAN PLOT-THE POPE, THE CARDINAL AND THE CIA

If a Third World War did not break out in 1952, as predicted by *Colliers* and expected by certain personages at the Vatican and elsewhere, the subterranean exertions to provide it continued unabated.

The curious amalgamation of sundry national, dynastic, religious and ideological elements increased, until at last, only three or four years later, its visible effects came to the fore with an insurrectional tornado in Central Europe.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 had been planned well in advance. Not so much by the regional and local forces which were eventually to take active part in it, but by its two grand inspirers, Pope Pius XII and the CIA.

The latter, while the organizer of its physical aspects, needed the active participation of the Vatican, since Catholic Intelligence inside Hungary was far more effective than any foreign agency, no matter how well equipped.

Without Rome's blessing, the whole of Catholic Intelligence and hence of the Catholic Hierarchy and of the Church would have remained inactive, thus paralyzing all the exertions of the CIA.

Pius XII at this period was at his most critical political and religious phase. He was suffering from recurrent and dangerous fits of depression. He considered himself a failure. All his original pre-war and post-war anti-Red policies had been reduced to naught. The promises of Fatima had remained unfulfilled. And while it was true that he had allied the Church to the mightiest nation on earth, the USA, and that he had helped to paralyze Communism in Europe by resurrecting political Catholicism, it was nevertheless also true that Russia was still there, more menacing than ever.

He thought of resigning from the Papacy. An unprecedented step. Rumours to that effect began to circulate in Rome. His nervous ailments increased. He fell ill, until finally the Lord Jesus Christ Himself came down to console him in person, as we have seen.

It may have been a coincidence. But the fact is that such alleged divine visitation occurred during the most critical period of the Hungarian Revolution, 1955-56. Pius XII's latest move to self-sanctification (i.e. Christ's visit), which he promptly disclosed to the world, going so far as to use the official organ of the Vatican for the purpose, had not been the naive fumbling of a neurotic patient. But the well calculated move of a mastermind aware that the plotting forces in Hungary and elsewhere would draw renewed vigour from the disclosure of his divine visitor, Central European Catholicism being more susceptible than any other to the religious and political influence of the Papacy.

Pius XII's serious illness occurred in the late autumn of 1955, the year the Hungarian insurrection had been carefully planned to "happen. " The CIA's and local plans misfired, and the date had to be postponed to the following year, 1956. The tension and anxiety which this produced were among the principal causes of Pius XII's nervous illness. One of the main figures in this new drama was, once more, Cardinal Mindszenty. The Cardinal had been designated a key part in a "successful insurrection." That is, he had been appointed jointly by Pius XII, the Hungarian insurrectionists and the CIA as "Premier" of Liberated Hungary. Once Catholic Hungary had a Cardinal as its Prime Minister or as Regent, the remaining unfoldment of Pius' grandiose schemes would be greatly facilitated.

Sundry paramount national and international interests played no mean role. Whether "spontaneous" popular forces joined them of their own volition it is for history to judge. What, however, was indisputable from the very beginning was that Pius XII, prior to and during the Hungarian tragedy, had a leading hand in the whole affair.

Cardinal Mindszenty, as one of his most devoted "creatures," played his part as zealously but as awkwardly as he had done almost a decade before. We have already seen how the Cardinal, soon after the Second World War, had hatched a plot meant to overthrow the Hungarian Government in order to install one headed by himself, followed by the restoration of the super-Catholic monarchy of Hapsburg.

The plot, blessed and encouraged by Pius XII, had miscarried,



Joseph, Cardinal Mindszenty, Archbishop of Budapest and Primate of Hungary, with his liberators outside his residence in Budapest, October 31, 1956, after his release.

Mindszenty was a fanatical "creature" of Pope Pius XII, who used him to further his religious and political schemes in Central Europe.

With the connivance of Pius and of nationalistic Catholic elements, Mindszenty, immediately after World War II, became the centre of a plot to overthrow the Government and to restore a Catholic Monarchy in Hungary, with himself as Regent.

The plot failed. Mindszenty was jailed (1946).

Ten years later Mindszenty became once more the focus of the Revolution. He returned to Budapest...the Capital, escorted by three Hungarian tanks... (October 1956) to head a new Hungarian Government, as the only public figure to command wide popular support.

The uprising, however, proved another failure. It was crushed by a ruthless Russian military intervention.

Mindszenty took refuge in the USA Legation of Budapest, where he was a "guest" for more than twelve long years (1956-1968), notwithstanding USA and Vatican pressure to dislodge him.

due chiefly to the undiplomatic political obtuseness of Cardinal Mindszenty himself. The Catholics and other personalities in the USA who had helped with political protection and money, although aghast, bade their time. The CIA, however, now took over, lock, stock and barrel. The Catholic Pretender, Otto, and others were relegated to

the background. Even Catholic Intelligence became subject to the supreme direction of the CIA. The insurrection, this time, could not be permitted to fail. Too much was at stake. The CIA-Vatican novel efforts were crowned with a spectacular success.

The Hungarian Government, taken by surprise, was duly overthrown. Cardinal Mindszenty, the innocent "martyr" who had been whiling away his time inside a monastery, became once more the focus of the revolution.

When, in October 1956, the insurrectionists took over the Hungarian Capital, what was one of their first, most ominous moves? This is how an authoritative organ described the event:

The Prince Primate Cardinal Mindszenty returned to Budapest today for the first time since 1948. The Cardinal, who was freed last night from the monastery in which he was confined... drove into the Capital escorted by three Hungarian tanks...Thousands of the faithful crowded round his house when the news spread that he was back, and knelt in the dust as the Cardinal gave them his blessing. (*Manchester Guardian*, Nov. 1956)[\[1\]](#)

After the Cardinal's return "in triumph," the revolutionary forces, now in command, "fully pardoned him." Then—note the timing—within the next twenty-four hours speculations arose to the effect that "Cardinal Mindszenty might head a new Hungarian Government, as the only public figure to command wide popular support."

The significance of the forthcoming appointment of the Cardinal being, of course, but the first phase in the unfolding of the Papal-CIA grand design. Since Hungary in reality was nothing but a stepping stone to its fulfillment. Once Mindszenty had become Head of the new Hungary, Pius XII and the CIA would have had a free hand to promote the second phase of their grand policy: namely, the invasion, occupation and conversion of Russia.

The plan misfired. A few days later, the counter-revolution was suppressed by the ruthless intervention of Russian tanks and troops.

For a while there loomed the peril of a USA-Russian armed confrontation. That is, the spectre of World War III rose, immediate and real, on the horizon.

At the Vatican, all the forces charged with manning the grand apparatus concerned with the invasion—or, rather, the "occupation" and "conversion"—of Russia were alerted. Religious fervour was mobilized. Special novenas, prayers and vigils were organized in

the churches and convents of many countries, including Hungary. Our Lady of Fatima was invoked, that her prophecy might at long last be fulfilled.

The expected war did not take place, although the world went once more to "the brink." Fear gripped the nations of Europe. At the Vatican, however, the Pope, instead of appealing for peace and working for the prevention of hostilities, initiated a mass hate campaign, unparalleled by any modern Pontiff. He went so far, in his daily incitement of the Catholic millions against the Reds, as to stir up such belligerency that even London's sober *The Times* described "what almost amounts to a crusade of Christendom."[\[2\]](#)

The counter-revolution came to naught. The CIA gnashed their teeth, overruled, for once, by the common sense of President Eisenhower. Even so, they could not abandon their Catholic Agents in Russian occupied Hungary. Plane loads of Catholic "refugees" were flown overnight to the USA. Among them, of course, were those who had been most compromised in the venture as the direct Agents of the CIA and of the Vatican.

Their principal "creature," the Premier designate of Hungary, Cardinal Mindszenty, however, was not so lucky. Or, rather, his task was not yet wholly accomplished. When the insurrection finally collapsed, thanks to the Russian mailed fist, the Cardinal disappeared. Then, after rumours had it that he might have fallen into the hands of the Communists, lo and behold! the Cardinal appeared, safe and sound, and wholly out of any danger of arrest or of hanging. Where? Inside the very building of the American Legation in the Hungarian Capital.[\[3\]](#) There, protected by diplomatic immunity, he celebrated Mass at an altar bedecked with American flags. The American Legation was forbidden, by very specific USA regulations, to give asylum to any political refugees. The CIA, however, waved this aside. They could not abandon a man who had served them so well, even though he was such a spectacular failure. Besides, the future might yet be kind. Three times lucky, as the popular saying goes. The Russian-backed Hungarian Government perhaps thought the same. After a decent period had elapsed, they began discreet negotiations with the Vatican and indeed, with the American Government itself. Did they wish to have Cardinal Mindszenty, either in Rome or in Washington? They were ready to let the "prisoner" go free, anywhere outside Hungary.

Some naive Catholics replied, "Let the "martyr" Cardinal join the Roman Curia, or go to the USA." Cardinal Mindszenty, however, refused to budge. The reason? His two mighty sponsors, Pope Pius XII and the CIA had other plans. They had decided to continue to make political capital out of the Cardinal's forced "asylum" in the U.S. Legation in Budapest. Since, as long as Mindszenty remained in Catholic Hungary, he would be the symbol of a potentially explosive political issue and hence the potential

source of a military dynamism capable of furthering Pius XII's grand schemes.

Cardinal Mindszenty remained an American "guest" for over twelve consecutive years, the exertions of two Popes failing to "dislodge" him. Indeed, when in 1967 the USA and Hungary restored normal relations and the U.S. Ambassador, Mr. Hillebrand, asked Mindszenty to go, the latter stubbornly refused to leave the Legation.

How close to war the world had come at this juncture was eventually disclosed by the highest American authority who knew more than anybody else what had been going on behind the scenes: namely, John Foster Dulles, the U.S. Secretary of State. He knew simply because he was one of the main organizers of the grand Vatican-CIA "Fatima" scheme.[\[4\]](#)

John Foster Dulles at this time was the veritable foreign policy maker of the USA. General Eisenhower, the President, knew more about war than about the intricacies of foreign policies. As a result he left practically the entire field in the hands of Dulles, whose paramount obsession was Communism. Such obsession matched that of Pius XII. Dulles mobilized all the immense resources of the USA to deal with it the world over. He turned into the staunchest associate of Pius XII.

The partnership became one of the most formidable working partnerships of the period. Dulles conducted his policies very often without the approval or even knowledge of the American President. He was helped in this by the fact that, in addition to the regular USA diplomatic machinery, he used more than anything else the secretive and omnipotent apparatus of the CIA. Indeed, it can be said that he conducted American foreign policy via the CIA. Something that was facilitated by the ominous fact that the inspirer, director and master controller of the whole CIA was none other than his own brother, Alan Dulles.

The two brothers worked so closely together that President Eisenhower more than once had his official policy "nullified" by the CIA. The most spectacular example being the collapse of the American Russian Summit Meeting of 1960, when the CIA sent a spy plane over Russia so as to prevent the American President and the Russian Premier from terminating the "cold war." The meeting, thanks to the CIA's plane, was canceled.

It was one of the CIA's most sensational triumphs John Foster Dulles (whose son, incidentally, became a Jesuit) and Alan Dulles, in total accord with the Vatican Intelligence, conducted a foreign policy based on threats of "Massive retaliation"—that is, of atomic warfare.

At the height of the Hungarian insurrection—that is, in 1955 John Foster Dulles openly acknowledged to the horrified world that the USA had stood on the brink three times:

Mr. Dulles admitted that the USA had on three occasions in the past eighteen months come closer to atomic war...than was imagined

as the London and New York Times somberly reported.[\[5\]](#)

The Third World War had been avoided," they further commented, "only because Mr. Dulles...had seen to it that Moscow and Peking were informed of the USA's intention to use atomic weapons."

What did Pope Pius XII do during these terrible crises? Particularly since he, more than anyone else in the highest positions, knew what was going on behind the scenes between the USA and Russia?

He intensified the Cult of Fatima. The Cult was given added luster and impetus. Catholic churches prayed for the "liberation"—that is, for a speedy fulfillment of the "prophecy" of Our Lady. This also in view of the fact that the third "secret" of Our Lady of Fatima had to be revealed within a few years—that is, in 1960.



Hitler welcomes Mgr. Tiso, a Catholic priest, whom he made Chief of State of Nazi sponsored Slovakia—January 20th, 1941. Mgr. Tiso, leader of the Catholics of Slovakia, cooperated with Hitler in the final disintegration of the Republic of Czechoslovakia.

Before the Second World War he led Nazified Catholics against the Central Government of Prague. He was in continuous contact respectively with Pope Pius XII, from whom he took political directives, and Adolf Hitler, with whom he plotted for the ultimate military occupation of the Republic of Czechoslovakia.

Like Ante Pavelich, who helped to bring about the disintegration of Yugoslavia to set up his Independent Catholic State of Croatia under Nazi protection, so Mgr. Tiso worked incessantly for the final ruin of Czechoslovakia to create the Independent Catholic State of Slovakia, which he ruled as a Nazi Quisling State.

Although he never matched the terrorization of Croatia, nevertheless Mgr. Tiso set up a Catholic Dictatorship in which the Church was declared supreme and where Catholic-Nazi doctrines were ruthlessly enforced upon all and sundry. After the fall of Hitler, Mgr. Tiso was liquidated by the Allies. Pope Pius XII protested, saying that Mgr. Tiso had been a martyr for "religious freedom."

Although no one knew what the Fatima "secret" was, it was whispered that it was the imminent liberation and conversion of Russia. Pope Pius XII, of course, could not let Our Lady's third and last "secret" remain a secret from him too. He had the sealed letter, containing the secret according to one of the children who had spoken to Our Lady at Fatima, opened. He then related that, upon reading it, he had almost fainted with horrified astonishment. It was as good a method as any to incite the Fatima frenzy to even higher expectations.

Not content with this, Pius XII came to the fore personally to condition the Catholic World to the oncoming war. This so much so that during the winter of 1956-57 (note: immediately following the failure of the Hungarian counterrevolution) he brazenly called upon all Catholics to join in a veritable Fatima Crusade by urging them to take part "in a war of effective self-defense," asking that the United Nations be given "the right and the power of forestalling all military intervention of one State into another."

Indeed, at this very terrible period when the USA and Russia were truly on the brink of an atomic war, he went so far, as we have already quoted, as to reiterate "the morality of a defensive war," thus echoing the very words of his secret Chamberlain, the Secretary of the U.S. Navy, Mr. Matthews, in his famous Boston speech.

In fact, Pope Pius XII on this occasion called for what even the *London Times* described as "what almost amounts to a crusade of Christendom," and the *Manchester Guardian* bluntly called "the Pope's blessing for a preventive war" (with atom and hydrogen bombs, it should be remembered).[\[6\]](#)

While Pius XII was waiting for the outbreak of World War III, the leader of the Catholic Ustashi, Ante Pavelic, and his followers were making ready. They increased their efforts to resuscitate the Ustashi at home and abroad. Encouraged by the direct and indirect help of Pius XII, of the CIA, and of sundry Catholic Hierarchs and lay Catholics inside and outside the USA and other countries.

In the Argentine, for instance, where his "Croat Government in Exile" was functioning, he was openly subventioned and protected by the Argentine Hierarchy. Not to mention certain military groups, who refused his extradition from the country. Notwithstanding this, in 1957 Pavelic was attacked and almost killed, two bullets having hit him.

The following year (October 1958), Pius XII, assailed by ever more frequent attacks of nerves, asthma and a general neurosis and a victim of the immense amount of drugs that had sustained him for years, possibly the real cause of many hallucinations, promptly accounted as "miracles" by his admirers, died.

The World Press promptly acclaimed him as the Prince of Peace. Representatives from fifty-four countries attended the final requiem. Most prominent and most ominous was a USA delegation, headed by none other than Pius XII's secret partner, Mr. John Foster Dulles, U.S. Secretary of State and, no less significant, Mr. John McCone, Chairman of the USA Atomic Energy Commission (19th October, 1958).

Shortly afterwards, Pius XII's special protégé, Ante Pavelic, also passed away. A year later (1960) Cardinal Stepinac, too, went. Thus, within a brief span of two years the three main protagonists of the Catholic Croatian nightmare vanished from the stage.

Whatever the merits or demerits of the mutual American-Russian antagonism, the fact remains that Pius XII, far from labouring to diminish the peril, did his utmost to aggrandise it, in order to overthrow an ideological enemy, the better to overcome a religious foe—namely, the Russian Orthodox Church—whom the Vatican had been fighting vainly for the preceding one thousand years.

The occupation of Russia by the West would have spelled the potential control of the Orthodox Church by the Papacy. Catholic control would have meant but one thing: Orthodox absorption into the Catholic fold via persuasion or force, throughout the Russian occupied territories.

In short, a repetition of the Croatian experiment on a scale involving no longer one, but hundreds of millions of Orthodox believers.

In Pope Pius XII's daring calculations, therefore, the outbreak of World War III would have done for the Orthodox Church of Russia what World War II had done for the Orthodox Church of Croatia.

Footnotes

1. *The Manchester Guardian*, November 1, 1956.[\[Back\]](#)
 2. *The Times*, December 24, 1956.[\[Back\]](#)
 3. November 4, 1956. [\[Back\]](#)
 4. By "Fatima" scheme we mean the occupation of Russia.[\[Back\]](#)
 5. January 12, 1956, et seq. See also *World Press*.[\[Back\]](#)
 6. See *The Times*, London, December 24, 1956. Also the *New York Times*. Also *The Manchester Guardian*, December 27, 1956. Also *Time Magazine*, January 7, 1957.[\[Back\]](#)
-

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 22

THE MALTA INQUISITION—VOTE CATHOLIC OR BE DAMNED

In 1962, the Island of Malta was still a dependency of Great Britain. In that year there took place an historical political struggle upon whose outcome would depend the Island's future status.

The Catholic Church, as was to be expected, played no mean role in the proceedings. But, as always when she can do so, she used religion to promote her political interests and politics to promote her religious ones.

This she did with the utmost disregard for the basic tenets of democracy, liberty and honesty. Her influence being paramount, she could impose her will upon all and sundry in moral, ethical, social and thus even in political matters. As proved by the fact that the Maltese law on marriage was the law of the Catholic Church, as codified in the Catholic Canon Law, and that the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion was the religion of Malta.

Prior to the 1962 election, the main political opponent of the Church, the Maltese Labour Party, promised the electorate to reduce the overwhelming power of the Church by a reasonable liberalization. The Church came to the fore boldly, brazenly and determined to win, cost what it may. The civil authorities were already under her thumb while her opponent was hamstrung in all possible directions.

Catholic leaders, priests and others had complete freedom to speak, to preach and to hold assemblies; her opponents had to run the gauntlet of the Catholic police who, when they could not brazenly veto meetings, resorted to tricks bordering on the dishonest and the illegal.

In addition, the election commissioner and his assistants were all hand-picked by the Catholic Church via the colonial administration. That was not all. Catholic organizations and the priests often openly disturbed their opponents meetings. Indeed, it was an open secret that priests organized veritable religious-political expeditionary Catholic gangs with the specific purpose of breaking up assemblies. The Catholic crusaders were not all adults. Thousands of school children were taught genuine democracy in a practical way by being supplied by their parents with hooters and whistles, which they used en masse whenever they came across Labour speakers, often preventing the speeches from

being delivered.

A friend of the author, Mr. Tom Driberg, a prominent member of the House of Commons, who happened to be visiting the island at the time, was persistently hooted by hundreds of school children, who pursued him wherever he went, having taken him for a potential speaker, which he was not.

The Catholic clergy surpassed themselves in their vigorous activities to defend the spiritual interests of Holy Mother Church (and, we must not forget, one solid third of the island which she owned) by using their brains as well as their muscles to silence the devilish enemies.

And so the very bells of their belfries were made to work whenever the whistles of their children (who, presumably, were put to bed exhausted) had no more wind in them. The clergy's method was certainly a sonorous one. And most effective. For it not only silenced the Labour speakers, but deafened them and their listeners and those who did not want to listen at all, the Catholic themselves.

So it came to pass that when the former Maltese Premier, now enemy number one of God and of Saint Peter, began to address an open air meeting, the bells of a nearby Church began to toll.

At first both Catholics and Socialists assumed there was a funeral somewhere. Then, since the bells started to ring joyously, they supposed they had made a mistake and that it must be a wedding. Then, since the ringing turned into a kind of pandemonium, they concluded that somebody had already won the elections (still weeks ahead) or that there must be a carnival to celebrate some forgotten Saint or other.

The bells, however, were in no mood to rest. On the contrary, they tolled and pealed and rang with increasing energy, stopping periodically only for a few minutes, to let the speaker begin his first sentences, to start anew with devilish merriment. On this occasion the bells rang continuously for **THREE SOLID HOURS**, not one minute more and not one minute less.

When the Labour listeners, now practically stone deaf, lost their patience and attempted to take the bells by their ropes... via a well conducted siege of the belfry, they found the belfry and the Church unassailable. A massive police cordon had surrounded the sacred building, to prevent those vociferous silvery proclaimers of the rights of the Church from being silenced.

Dom. Mintoff, the speaker who had not been permitted to speak, and the parish priest who had ordered that the bells be rung had sufficient energy left to write. So, while the first wrote protests to his own press, the latter wrote a justification of his sonorous interpretation of freedom of speech to the *Times of Malta* (February 3, 1962). That journal one morning printed an illuminating letter from Father Innocenzo Borg, of Luqa (the place where the bells had tolled for three solid hours).

What? He, anti-democratic? he asked. What an insult! Like the Catholic Church and the Archbishop of Malta, he, too, was a firm believer in freedom of speech. Had he made the bells toll? Yes, he had. But, assured Father Innocenzo, he had given the Labour speakers several opportunities to stop speaking...and if that was not democracy, could anyone tell him what true democracy meant? Here are the very words which the good Father Innocenzo (i.e. Innocent) wrote in his letter of explanation:

As regards the ringing of the bells which continued long after sunset, may I say that the pealing of bells stopped when the loudspeakers with their irreligious and scandalous talk did stop. The bells rang, in fact, as a protest against this kind of speech... and a speaker began to attack the church teaching and his Grace the Archbishop. Several times, the ringing of the bells for a very *short time* had unsuccessfully warned this speaker to stop his irreligious speech, before the din of the bells as Mr. Mintoff put it, "attempted to interfere with the public meeting taking place in the public square."[\[1\]](#)

In addition to the mobilization of belfries, that of the porches of churches followed suit, as well as of their walls, internal and external. For posters of all sizes, colours and kinds appeared all over Malta, decorating the sacred buildings with slogans in which the Devil, the Labour Party, all the Saints of the Calendar and even God Himself, not to mention the Catholic Church figured prominently.

"Vote as directed by the Diocesan Junta," said a poster on a Young Christian Workers Club. "God will be watching you. God will judge you." "If you vote for the enemy of the Church," said another, on the walls of Gudja Parish Church, "you will be defying the Bishop, you will be defying God (sic)."

Parish priests sent letters to the voters. Witness the one received by the parishioners of Marsa, Malta, written by Father Felicjan Bilocca of the Order of St. Francis:

Before you cast your vote, say unto yourself: I have but one soul. Am I going to lose it because of Mintoff?

A picture at the top of the circular showed Father Felicjan blessing the new Church at Marsa dedicated to Our Lady of Tears.[\[2\]](#)

Whether the voters thus addressed shed tears of joy at the Father's political counsel is not recorded. But in all probability, remembering their souls, they voted as he told them to vote. Thousands more did likewise. Father Felicjan Bilocca was not the only one to use religious fear to compel voters to vote for the Church. Following threatening words with deeds, the Church ordered whoever she could mobilize to vote according to her dicta. All young seminarians who had never voted before, for instance, were compelled to go to the polls. All the sick and the infirm of Malta were mobilized. Witness the following extracts from a stenciled circular sent to bedridden voters before polling day:"

We know that many of you never leave your home, not even to hear Holy Mass. This time, however, **YOU MUST COME OUT.**

God knows your good intentions, and He will give you the help you need.

We must vote for those whom we know not to be against the priests, against the Church and against the Archbishop.

Do your duty, dear brethren, so that you will share in the Victory for Catholic Malta.[\[3\]](#)

After which there was the following warning:

Our volunteers will be wearing a badge mounted with a coloured photograph of Mons. Archbishop. Do not accept lifts to the polling booths from persons who are against the Church.

That was not all. The Catholic Church mobilized her most feared spiritual weapons and unblushingly used religious "terror" to compel voters to vote her way. Imitating Pope Pius XII, who years before had done the same, they told the Maltese, in no uncertain terms, that unless they voted for the political party favoured by the Church they would be grilled in the flames of Hell for endless millions of years. Purgatory, in this case, was to be bypassed altogether. Priests all over the island told voters that it was a mortal sin to vote for Labour. The Archbishop himself gave specific instructions to that effect:

Preachers can indeed be of great service for the reassertion of the Church both in civil and political matters, as the occasion demands... and for the

recuperation of souls lost on account of political matters... In their sermons or speeches they should explain the divine influence of the Church for the formation of a perfect society both private and public; about the divine power of the Church and her unerring judgment, **EVEN IN CIVIL LAWS**; about the gravity of mortal sin... the utility of Catholic associations. [\[4\]](#)

The Archbishop's words were confirmed by the Bishop of Gozo who, in April of the same year, published a circular telling Catholic voters that to belong to the Labour Party or even to attend its meetings was "a mortal sin."

To coordinate the individual and collective fear thus engendered by the Hierarchy, the Vatican then dispatched to Malta from Rome some of its best "organizers," specialized in that very type of warfare generated directly by religious pressure and the fear of the punishment of God.

These specialists were veterans in that kind of religious-political pressure, since they had used it in exactly the same way on a larger scale in Italy several times before. For instance, back in 1949, Pope Pius XII had excommunicated all and sundry who either directly or indirectly supported the Communists or their allies the Socialists, in order to compel them to vote for the Catholic Party, inspired and backed by the Vatican itself. In 1959 the *Holy Office* had reiterated the excommunication, followed by another one in 1965, when Cardinal Ottaviani said that the *Holy Office* decrees were still in force. [\[5\]](#)

Tacticians" like Father Rotondi, a Jesuit, led by none other than Professor Gedda, a former President of Italian Catholic Action, descended upon Malta and coordinated the religious pressure to yield the maximum political results at the voting stations.

Professor Gedda, a brilliant organizer, had even fuller cooperation from the Maltese Hierarchy than he had received from the Hierarchy in Italy, where the Church, notwithstanding her boldness, has to tread with a certain care. In Malta, the Church went further than anywhere else. That is, she transformed the sacrosanct confessional into a polling ballot box. Confessors were ordered to tell penitents how to vote. Disobedience meant refusal of absolution. On the days of Our Lord January 29 and 30, 1962, His Grace the Archbishop called a secret meeting of all **FATHER CONFESSORS** only, at the Catholic Institute, Floriana, and ordered them orally—under a **THREAT OF EXCOMMUNICATION**—to "ask penitents whether they were voting Labour and to refuse them absolution if the penitents persisted."

And so it came to pass that one morning—or, perhaps, evening—the stupefied Maltese Catholics discovered that their confessionals, those havens of secrecy and spiritual

comfort which they had always assumed were dedicated exclusively to whisperings between them and their spiritual fathers concerning interesting private misdeeds (mostly confined to love and money), now had become places of veritable political confabulation, whence the Archbishop of Malta ordered them how and for whom to vote.

In case readers should doubt the authenticity of these archiepiscopal instructions, we quote a few. They are an ad litteram translation of the Latin text distributed by hand on March 7, 1962, to parish priests only:

Methods of Procedure for Father Confessors and Preachers:[\[6\]](#)

A. As regards the Father Confessors

1. First of all, confessors should inquire of the penitent whether he voted or not.
2. If the penitent did not vote, the confessor should ask him why he shirked to fulfill such a heavy obligation.

(a) If the penitent shirked this obligation through mere negligence while conscious of the gravity of such a thing, he is to be accused of a serious omission...

(b) If he shirked this obligation because he had no faith in any of the candidates...he should be argued with...; he should, however, be **REFUSED ABSOLUTION** unless he faithfully accepts the relevant directions issued in May 1961 against the spokesmen of the political party hostile to the teaching of Holy Mother Church.

(c) If indeed he shirked this obligation through malice he should be **REFUSED ABSOLUTION...**

3. If the penitent voted for the party hostile to the Church, the confessor should ask whether in so doing the penitent had sinned in private or in public (such public action implies either making ones intention manifest or canvassing for that party).

(a) If the penitent declared himself to have sinned privately, whether he should be absolved or not depends on his sincerity...

(b) If on the other hand he sinned in public, he should **NOT BE**

ABSOLVED, unless and until he makes his atonement public...and honestly promises that wherever possible he will make reparation to the same extent that he had wrought damage to the Church, Bishops, Priests, and all those he may have offended.[\[7\]](#)

So much for the sacrosanct sacrament of the confession which, Catholics never tire of repeating, is inviolate and dedicated exclusively to spiritual matters.

Having terrified the voters in the secretiveness of the confessionals, the Maltese Hierarchy now came into the open and inflicted a spiritual leprosy upon their political opponents by hurling their bolts against the members of the National Executive Party. Here are their words:

Their lordships... feel compelled to inflict from now the canonical penalty of personal interdiction according to canons 2291-2 and 2275 on all those who at the meeting of the National Executive of the Malta Labour Party held on March 15, 1961, took part in the drawing up of the statement or approved of it by their votes...[\[8\]](#)

In short, the members of the party opposed to the Church had been put out of bounds to all Catholics by the canonical penalty of "personal interdiction."

The result of this state of affairs can be gauged by the fact that foreign visitors to the island at that period were, to quote a well known member of the British Parliament who was among them, "treated with such ferocious hostility and discourtesy" that the car they were in was shot at.[\[9\]](#)

The Church's vengeance against her political opponents went even further. Not content with the mobilization of terror in this world, she mobilized terror of the next that would pursue them beyond the tomb. Thus Joseph Mercer, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, who died in September 1961, was not given burial where Christians were usually interred, but was laid in a spot popularly known as the "refuse dump." He had not even been present at the Executive Meeting of March 15, and was a practicing Catholic. Another Labour Party member was refused burial in the same way.[\[10\]](#)

As the election day approached, the Church intensified her pressure upon all and sundry. News agents were forbidden to sell literature opposing the Catholic party, Catholics were forbidden to put advertisements in Labour journals. Over 80 per cent complied, for fear of reprisals. Children were questioned by priests as to the political attitudes of their parents, while parents not conforming to the political dicta of the

Church were denied the sacraments.

Finally, on the eve of the elections, crucifixes draped in mourning were paraded in village squares with the caption: "Why are you voting against Me?"

Last but not least, during polling day itself, to complete the campaign of terror against the already cowed Maltese Catholics, cohorts of black robed priests, nuns and monks appeared at the voting queues and stationed themselves in front of the voters, chanting and saying the rosary, while bedridden and practically dying faithful were carried on stretchers to vote "for the Church and for God." The result? The Church won."^[11]

Footnotes

1. Letter from the Reverend Father Innocenzo Borg, Parish Priest of Luqa, to *The Times of Malta*, February 3, 1962. See also *Suppression of Freedom of Conscience in Malta*, May 28, 1962—a collection of documents and Photostats dealing with the 1962 Elections.[\[Back\]](#)

2. See *Suppression of Freedom of Conscience and Freedom of Speech during the Recent Elections in Malta*, May 28, 1962.[\[Back\]](#)

3. Signed Monsignor M. Azzopardy, Director of the *Family of the Sick*. Issued by the Diocesan Junta of Catholic Organizations Movement for the Victory of Catholic Malta.[\[Back\]](#)

4. See *Suppression of Freedom of Conscience and Freedom of Speech during the Recent Elections in Malta*, May 28, 1962.[\[Back\]](#)

5. Cardinal Ottaviani's reminder to Catholics everywhere, August 1965, Rome.[\[Back\]](#)

6. The written instructions were distributed on March 7, 1962, a few weeks AFTER the elections. This was done for fear that, had the written instructions been distributed before or during the elections, the British government would have been forced to cancel the elections, as they had done in 1930. The instructions were then put in writing since by 1966, when the next general elections were due, Malta would have become independent. Thus, being no longer subject to the British government, the Church, under a Maltese administration supported by her, would be free to act without restraint—as, indeed, she did.[\[Back\]](#)

7. For complete text, see *Methods of Procedure for Father Confessors and Preachers*, Document "J." Photostat copies of the Latin original are held by the Malta Labour Party. See also *Suppression of Freedom of Conscience and Freedom of Speech during the Recent Elections in Malta*, Memorandum and Supporting Documents, May, 1962. [\[Back\]](#)
8. *Priests and Politics in Malta*, 1962. [\[Back\]](#)
9. See *Reynolds News*, December 3, 1961; also *The Voice of Malta*, December 10, 1961. [\[Back\]](#)
10. *Idem.* [\[Back\]](#)
11. Two years later, in 1964, Malta became independent. The date of Independence, however, due in the spring, had to be postponed because the Church in Malta refused to accept certain basic democratic clauses inserted by the British government in the new Constitution, since the new Constitution, as the Secretary of State for the Colonies said during discussion of the Malta Independence Bill in the House of Commons, July 23, 1964, was not going to "place the Catholic Church above the law." (Parliamentary Debates, Hansard, Volume 699, No. 149, columns 709-710).

The Maltese Church, with the connivance of her representative, had tried every device to put herself above the Constitution, finally counting on the time limit of thirty-six hours before the House of Commons went into recess. Thanks, however, to Lord Alexander of Hillsborough and others, the maneuver did not succeed. For further documentation of the 1962 Elections in Malta, see *Suppression of Freedom of Conscience and Freedom of Speech during the Recent Elections in Malta*, May 1962, Memorandum and Supporting Documents. Also, *Malta Independence Bill - Order for Second Reading*, House of Commons, July 23, 1964. Parliamentary Debates, Hansard, Volume 699.

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 23

VIETNAM—THE CROATIA OF ASIA

The tragedy of the war of South Vietnam, with all its immense complications for the USA, Asia and the rest of the world, at first would seem to have nothing whatever to do with the Catholic Church.

This is incorrect. Since the Vietnamese tragedy had its origin in the religious and ideological influence exercised by the Catholic Church in the affairs of that country from its very beginning.

We are not here dealing with the rights or wrongs of the Vietnamese war. But only with the paramount role which religion, with particular reference to the Catholic Church, has played in its inception. The Vietnamese tragedy was precipitated by a zealous Catholic trio formed by a Catholic President, a Catholic Head of the Secret Police, and a Catholic Archbishop. All were determined to impose the religious and political writ of the Church upon a non-Christian culture.

How did it happen, particularly in view of the fact that South Vietnam was an Asian Buddhist land?

Here is a bird's-eye view of the events which immediately preceded the outbreak of the Vietnamese-USA war.

One day in early June, 1963, a 73 year old Buddhist monk named Thich Quang Duc stopped in a busy street in Saigon, the Capital City of South Vietnam, and, after having been soaked with gasoline by a fellow monk, sat down cross-legged; thereupon, having calmly struck a match, he burned himself to death.

Prior to this, however, he had written a message to President Diem: "Enforce a policy of religious equality," the message read.

President Diem, a zealous Catholic, gave a prompt response. He clamped martial law upon the city, sealed most of the pagodas, ordered his secret police force to arrest Buddhist leaders, and mobilized his troops to truncheon any Buddhist monk or any Buddhist crowds who dared to protest at his increasing discrimination against their

religion.

The self-immolation of Thich Quang Duc was the culmination of an increasingly virulent discriminatory campaign against Buddhism by a Roman Catholic Premier, President Ngo Dinh Diem, of South Vietnam. President Diem by this time had ruled the country for about nine years, helped by his two brothers, Ngo Dinh Nhu, head of the secret police, and Ngo Dinh Thuc, Archbishop of Hue. The trio had been inching for years toward veritable religious persecution of the vast majority of the country's population of 15 million, only 1,500,000 of whom were Catholics.

The spark to the Buddhist revolt was set only a few days before in Hue, the ancient Vietnamese capital, now the See of the Archbishop, who reigned, ruled and dominated Catholics and non-Catholics alike in his role of a spiritual guide to his two brothers, the president and the head of the secret police. At a celebration to honour the Archbishop, the Catholic contingent at Hue flew the flag of the Vatican, without any Buddhist objection. When, three days later, the whole country celebrated the 2,507th birthday of Buddha and the Buddhists unfurled their religious flag, the Archbishop, via the authorities, forbade them to do so. This, it must be remembered, in a country eighty per cent of whose population are practicing Buddhists.

The Buddhists staged a peaceful demonstration march against the edict. As a reply, the government sent troops and armoured cars and fired at the demonstrators, killing nine Buddhists.

The Hue massacre caused demonstrations all over South Vietnam. Buddhist delegations in Saigon demanded the removal of restrictions on their religion and the discriminatory laws imposed against them. The government arrested many of the demonstrators.

In Hue, meanwhile, when another demonstration of Buddhists paraded the city, troops dispersed them, using tear gas bombs. Result: sixty-seven people were taken to hospital with chemical burns.

The USA protested. President Diem seemed to take note, but discriminations against the Buddhists continued unabated. Arrests of Buddhist monks multiplied. Pagodas were declared out of bounds, closed and at times even attacked. Catholic soldiers fought with Buddhist soldiers within the national army, engaged upon a life or death war against the communist regime of the North. The war, supported by American arms and by 16,000 American



President Ngo Dinh Diem, of South Vietnam.

President Diem was a fanatical Catholic who ruled South Vietnam with an iron fist.

He transformed the Presidency into a virtual Catholic Dictatorship, which he used to crush his religious and political opponents with the utmost ruthlessness.

He persecuted non-Catholics, and particularly the Buddhists. By his discriminatory methods he caused the disruption of the Army and Government. This eventually was to lead to the USA's military intervention in South Vietnam.

He ruled with the spiritual and political terrorization of his two equally fanatical Catholic brothers, the Chief of the Secret Police and the Archbishop of Hue.

President Diem had originally been "planted" into the Presidency by Cardinal Spellman and Pope Pius XII.

Buddhist monks committed suicide by fire, burning themselves alive in protest against his religious persecutions.

He, with one of his brothers, was murdered immediately after hearing mass on Nov. 2, 1963. (3 weeks before Kennedy's death)!!

"advisors," was jeopardized by the rapidly deteriorating religious strife. President Kennedy, a Catholic, put pressure upon the Catholic trio in Vietnam. But, since this

seemed to have no effect, he finally suspended, among other heavy USA subsidies, part of the American Central Intelligence Agency's two million dollars monthly payment to the South Vietnam "special forces" and stopped the funds which financed the super-Catholic head of the secret police.

Although protests from all over the world went on, the Catholic trio continued in their set policy: Catholicization of South Vietnam. Hasty promotions of Catholics in the government and in the army were increased, and this to such an extent that many Buddhist officers became converted to Catholicism solely with a view to swift promotion.

President Kennedy changed ambassadors in an effort to persuade the three brothers to alter their policy. In July, 1963, he sent President Diem a personal message of confidence via Ambassador Nolting. Kennedy's efforts once more were of no avail. On the contrary, the head of the secret police, with the excuse that Red elements had been found amongst the Buddhists, turned the harsh discriminatory campaign against the Buddhists into actual religious persecution.

Buddhist monks, Buddhist nuns and Buddhist leaders were arrested by the thousand. Pagodas were closed or besieged. Buddhists were tortured by the police. One day another Buddhist monk burned himself alive in public, to draw the attention of the world to the Catholic persecution. President Diem, undeterred, continued in his policy. The secret police packed the jails with more monks. The third monk committed suicide by fire, and then another. Within a brief period, seven of them had burned themselves alive in public. Vietnam was put under martial law. Troops now occupied many pagodas and drove out all monks offering resistance. More Buddhist monks and Buddhist nuns were arrested and taken away in lorries, including a large number of wounded. Many were killed.

Ten thousand Buddhists took part in a hunger strike in blockaded Saigon, while a giant gong tolled from the tower of the main Xa Loi Pagoda in protest against the persecutions. At Hue, in the North, monks and nuns put up a tremendous struggle at the main pagoda of Tu Dam, which was virtually demolished, while eleven Buddhist students burned themselves inside it.

The USA applied even stronger pressure and threatened to cut off all aid to President Diem. Again, all to no avail. South Vietnam's Ambassador in Washington, a Buddhist, resigned in protest. President Diem's brother and sister-in-law, Mrs. Nhu, advocated even harsher treatment of the Buddhists. Mrs. Nhu scoffed openly at the Buddhist monks who had committed suicide by setting themselves alight, declaring that they had

used "imported gasoline" to "barbecue" themselves.

By this time the Buddhist leader, Thich Tri Quang, had to seek asylum in the American Embassy, to escape with his life.[\[1\]](#) The American government had grown openly impatient. The USA State Department issued an official declaration deploring the repressive actions the South Vietnamese government had taken against the Buddhists. "On the basis of information from Saigon it appears that the government of the Republic of Vietnam has instituted serious repressive measures against the Vietnamese Buddhist leaders," it said. "The action represents direct violation by the Vietnamese government of assurances that it was pursuing a policy of reconciliation with the Buddhists. The USA deplores repressive actions of this nature."[\[2\]](#)

Vietnam was split. The army became openly restive and put up passive resistance, not against the communists, but against their own government. Result: the war against the communist North was being rapidly lost, since the population at large, upon whose support the struggle ultimately rested, refused to cooperate.

At long last the USA, realizing how its strategy in that part of Asia was in serious danger of collapsing, took action. The American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in cooperation with Vietnamese Buddhist elements successfully engineered a "coup." President Diem and his brother, the head of the secret police, had to run for their lives, but were soon discovered by rebel troops hiding in a small Catholic Church in Cholon. Both men were killed and their bodies laid in St. Joseph's Hospital a few hundred yards away from the Xa Loi Pagoda, the religious centre of the Buddhist resistance to their authoritarianism. [\[3\]](#)

So ended one of the most Catholic regimes of recent times. What the world at large, which had followed the religious strife with horrified fascination, did not know was the pressure of conflicting policies within the Catholic circles themselves—in Washington, South Vietnam and the Vatican. Kennedy, the first Catholic President of the USA, when inheriting the American policy in South Vietnam, inherited also Catholic President Diem. In different circumstances, the sharing of common religious beliefs might have helped in the conduct of a common policy, since the political interests of the two countries ran parallel. With Catholic Diem pursuing such anachronistic religious persecutions, however, Catholic Kennedy felt increasingly ill at ease, since he was too astute a politician to compromise his political career or to sacrifice the interests of the USA for the sake of a fellow Catholic who, after all, was incurring the opprobrium of the vast majority of Americans, most of whom still looked upon Kennedy's Catholicism with suspicion. Hence the Kennedy Administration's blessing upon the final overthrow of the Diem regime.

The disastrous policy of the South Vietnamese Catholic government was the dire result of the campaign initiated by the political grand strategy of two men: John Foster Dulles for the USA and Pope Pius XII for the Vatican. The Diem dynasty was put into power by them both when the cold war was at its zenith: that is, after the French were soundly defeated in the Indo-China war and the USA stepped in to fill the vacuum in what eventually became known as South Vietnam.

From the beginning the USA decided to back a government headed by an individual who would give a guarantee not to show any quarter to the communists, either at home or abroad. The person chosen: Diem. Diem was a man with a strong inclination to mysticism, a practicing and quietly fanatical Catholic. In his early youth he had wanted to become a Catholic priest, but ironically enough, was dissuaded from so doing by his brother, the future Archbishop of Hue, who told him that the vocation of a Catholic priest would be too soft for him. That the advice was not a jest was subsequently proven by the fact that when Diem, during the French crisis, was forced to go into exile to the USA, and to Belgium, he always chose to stay in Catholic monasteries, leading the austere life of their inmates.

To Dulles and to Pius XII, this religious asceticism was the surest guarantee that Diem would execute their joint policy with the utmost fidelity. And in this they were right, as subsequent events demonstrated. People who knew better, however, were not of the same opinion about Diem's suitability. The American Embassy, for instance, advised against him from the very beginning. The Embassy's warning was completely ignored by Washington, and, although the State Department itself was against the choice, the Special Operations Branch of the Pentagon insisted on Diem. It had its way. What was the explanation? A certain clique at the Pentagon, inspired by another in the Central Intelligence Agency with intimate links to the Catholic lobby in Washington and certain Cardinals in the USA, and consequently in perfect accord with the Vatican, had decided to have a staunch Catholic in South Vietnam.

It must be remembered that the period was when the Cold war was at its worst, when its arch-exponents, the Dulles brothers—one at the State Department and the other at the CIA—and Pius XII at the Vatican, were conducting a joint diplomatic, political and ideological grand strategy embracing both the West and the Far East, of which Vietnam was an integral part.

The choice proved a disaster for South Vietnam and for the USA's Asian policy, since, as we have just seen, the religious issue was eventually to stultify the whole grand American strategic pattern there.

But it is often the case with Catholics in authority that whenever the circumstances permit, and their power is no longer restricted by either constitutional clauses or other checks, they tend to conduct a policy more and more consonant with the spirit of their religion. The result being that, by combining the interests of their country with those of their church, more often than not they create unnecessary social and political disturbances which ultimately are bound to generate opposition in both religious and political fields.

When this state of affairs is nearing a crisis owing to the resistance of the non-Catholic opposition, then the Catholics exerting political or military power will not hesitate to use that power against those who oppose them. At this stage, the interests of their church will, as a rule, oust those of their country.

This formula proved to be correct in the case of South Vietnam. President Diem, having provoked such a crisis, disregarded the interests of the country, no less than those of its protectors, the USA, to pursue what he considered were the interests of his church.

Whereas political and military factors of no mean import played a leading part in the ultimate tragedy, the religious factor, in fact, which by obscuring the political and military vision of President Diem, led him to disaster. President Diem, in spite of, or because of, his religious asceticism, was in his political conduct greatly influenced by his brother, the head of the secret police, who did not hesitate to unleash a veritable religious persecution of monks, nuns and Buddhist leaders, as already seen.

An even more potent religious factor behind them was the fanaticism of the third brother, the Archbishop of Hue. The Archbishop was the "spiritual guide" of both the head of the police and the president. It is no coincidence that the open flaring up of the religious war began in his See, in Hue. The Archbishop was the driving power behind the systematically mounting religious discrimination against the Buddhists. Supporting the Archbishop was Pope Pius XII.

The similarity between the fanatical Catholic President of South Vietnam and the Archbishop of Hue, and Croatian Dictator Ante Pavelic and the Archbishop of Zagreb, could not be more striking. Thus, whereas the political and military machinery controlled by the South Vietnamese and Croatian dictators was put at the disposal of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Church put her spiritual and ecclesiastical machinery at the disposal of the two dictators, who made everyone and everything subordinate to her religious and political totalitarianism.

Both Diem and Pavelic, aided by their respective Archbishops, pursued three objectives simultaneously:

- (a) the annihilation of a political enemy, i.e. Communism;
- (b) as justification for the annihilation of an enemy Church, i.e. the Orthodox Church in the case of Pavelic and Buddhism in the case of Diem;
- (c) the installation of Catholic religious and political tyranny in each country.

Notwithstanding the different circumstances, and geographical and cultural backgrounds characteristic of Croatia and South Vietnam, the pattern and ultimate goal pursued by the two Regimes was exactly the same: anything and anyone not conforming or submitting to Catholicism was to be ruthlessly destroyed via arrest, persecution, concentration camps and executions.

With the result that, by relegating the interests of their country to the background, so as to further the interests of their religion, both dictators finally brought their lands into the abyss.

In the case of President Diem, when he put Catholicism first, he alienated the vast majority of the South Vietnamese masses and of the South Vietnamese army who, it must be remembered, were Buddhists and on the whole supported him politically. This brought the collapse of the anti-Communist front upon which Diem's policy stood. The chaos which ensued in its turn set in motion USA military intervention. The South Vietnamese and Croatian Catholic dictatorships, therefore, are the most striking examples of how the spirit of Catholicism can stultify the most diverse political systems and cultures with the bacillae of intolerance.

It cannot be otherwise. Since her claims to uniqueness and hence to religious supremacy will be identified with those who are ready to accept them as basic truths upon which the fabric of society must rest.

An Eskimo and a Central African or, in our case, a Croat and a South Vietnamese, therefore, notwithstanding all their racial and cultural differences, by the very fact that they are members of the same anti-libertarian Church, will automatically scorn democracy and abhor freedom.

The import of this is portentous. The implication being that the Catholic Church is

potentially capable of carrying out the ghastly experiments of both Croatia and South Vietnam in other countries, independently of their political systems.

Which means that, given the favourable circumstances, she would not hesitate to repeat them anywhere in the world, wherever there are Catholics. And, since there are Catholics in practically every country, the risk of another Croatian or South Vietnamese "experiment" in the near or distant future, becomes not a theoretical speculation.

But a possibility.

In the case of Vietnam, the role played by the Catholic Church has been paramount. Not only during the conflict, but also during the agonizing period of its termination. It was then that the Vatican struck a deal with the Communists of the North, while the USA went on fighting. The Pope externalized the secret Vatican-North Vietnam deal by consecrating the WHOLE of Vietnam—that is the North and the South to the Virgin Mary. This was years before the war had even ended. Details of the secretive Vatican-Communist operations can be assessed in the work of the present author *Vietnam, Why Did We Go?*

The consecration of the United Communist Vietnam was done by good Pope John XXIII, and seconded by Pope Paul VI. A religious move, which had indicated on which side the Vatican had sided, when the USA had began to lose the war.

Footnotes

1. [Vietnam, Why Did We Go?](#), Published by the Reformation Online.[\[Back\]](#)
 2. *Idem.*[\[Back\]](#)
 3. *Idem.*[\[Back\]](#)
-

[Return to Contents](#)

Chapter 24

WHERE WILL BE THE NEXT HOLOCAUST?

The strength and the weakness of the Catholic Church is her unshakable belief that she is the **ONLY** repositor of Truth; since it is the right of truth to eliminate error, it follows that it is her duty to eliminate anything which is not consonant with *Truth*, namely with **HER** *truth*.

Because there cannot be two truths, any truth which is not hers are ipso facto errors. Because truth has the right to eliminate error, it is the duty of the Catholic Church to oppose and annihilate the latter.

That means that she is empowered to use any means, persuasion if possible but force if necessary, to prevent error from opposing truth; that is to oppose her *Truth*.

Her logic is faultlessly uncompromising, hence her dogmatism, both theological and operational. These have not been confined to abstractions, moral issues, or eschatological speculations. They have trespassed into the fields of concrete policies and have permeated her conduct from the beginning.

As soon as Constantine gave official recognition as a religion, she started to harass both Christians and non-Christians, who were not consonant with her. Her harassment of those not conforming with her commenced as early as the Fourth Century AD.

Such behaviour became a tradition. It lasted and progressed for more than a thousand years. The apex of her intolerance eventually became epitomized by the Inquisition. The latter, in the Spanish Inquisition, which terrorized the whole of Europe for more than five centuries.

Her claims of being the **ONLY** holder of truth, the fountain-spring of her historic intolerance, has never been revoked by her. She has maintained it with ever increasing resolution and ferocity until our own days. All her past actions bespeak of the constancy of such immutable intolerance. Since the Fourth Century AD her conduct has been patterned on nothing else.

The immutability of her resolve to compel everything and everybody to accept her

belief, is compounded by her other belief that it is her duty to save the souls of ALL CHRISTIANS. A charge which culminated with the other belief, extension of such Catholic salvation to all mankind.

Hers is not a sporadic theological caprice of overzealous individuals. The Church has made it an official policy and objective of her own since the earliest times.

Pope Innocent gave precise instructions to all Inquisitors to enforce such regulations throughout Europe. Eventually it was made Statute Law. The regular clergy proved reluctant, so the Popes turned to the most fanatical, intolerant and narrow-minded section of the Church structure, the sundry monastic orders.

The two which excelled in their infamous task were the Dominicans and the Franciscans. Armed with practically unlimited power from the Popes, these Inquisitors swarmed all over Europe like theological hornets, setting up tribunals wherever they appeared.

Soon individuals, communities, nations, and indeed, the very hierarchy trembled at the mere mention of their names. Wherever they came, denunciations, accusations, treachery, perjury, torture, woe and death resulted.

The hooded Inquisitors did not content themselves with establishing their court in the sundry lands of Europe. Pope Gregory IX appointed a Dominican Grand Inquisitor for the whole of Armenia and Russia. Pope Urban VI ordered the General of the Dominicans to appoint Inquisitors for Armenia, Greece and Tartary (China).

Pope Nicholas IV asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem to create Inquisitors from the mendicant friars in his land. Pope Gregory XI granted authority to the Franciscan Provincial in the Holy Land to act as Chief Inquisitor in Syria, Palestine and even Egypt.

When an Inquisitor arrived everybody was commanded, in obedience to the Pope and to Mother Church, to disclose the name of anyone suspected of the slightest deviation from the *Faith*. The Inquisitors issued a compelling threat and a promise. A denouncer would get an indulgence of three years. Those avoiding their duty would be excommunicated.

Some denunciations were factual but many were concocted by vengeance, spite or jealousy. Those denounced, even on the flimsiest accusation or mere suspicion, would be arrested and flung directly into prison.

This usually was a common dungeon. Cold and damp, it lacked light or sanitation, and contained cut-throats, thieves and the like. Among these the friars would plant spies to induce the accused, by pretended friendship, threats, or other methods, to admit his guilt.

If this first step proved insufficient, the suspected *heretic* would be chained with heavy irons and left to starve in a dark, foul hole called the *durus carcer*—"cruel prison." The accused was then brought before the inquisitorial tribunal composed of friars. If he asked the names of his accusers, he was told that only his judges had the right to know their names. He had no such right.

He was asked to confess to his guilt. If he pleaded innocence, he would be sent back to prison. On a second or third appearance before the Court, if he persisted he was put to torture. The whole purpose of his trial, of course, was to force a confession of heresy.

Torture was inflicted without solid proof of guilt. Two complainers or even one single accuser was sufficient for subjection to the agonies of torture, even if the accused man had, until then, been of unblemished character, pristine honesty and genuine piety.

The methods, kinds and degrees of torture were endless. The three basic ones employed were hoisting the man to the ceiling by his hands tied behind his back, breaking him on the rack, or greasing his feet and thrusting them into the fire.

If, following all the exquisite devices of torture, the *heretic* refused to recant or to admit his guilt, then the Inquisitors would pass capital sentence for heresy. To complete the macabre farce, the Holy Inquisitors would ask these same temporal powers, in the name of the Church, not to kill the poor accused. This formality was a mere legalistic device to make the Church appear innocent of the blood which was about to be spilled—or rather, burned.

The civil authorities could not heed this hypocritical plea, however, lest the Holy Inquisition fall upon them. Refusal to burn the heretic would have placed the temporal authorities themselves on trial for their lives. For heresy, of course!

Soon no one was safe from potential arrest. The spying, denunciation, and hunting down of *heretics* reached cleric or lay, men or women, noble or common. No one was immune from the terrorizing omnipresence of the Holy Inquisition.

This reign of Catholic terror lasted for centuries. Hundreds of thousands of men, women, and yes, even children were murdered...burned alive at the stake. Simply because they dared to disagree with the Holy Catholic Church or with her Popes.

This Vatican terror officially ended less than two hundred years ago. As recently as 1762 a Protestant pastor was condemned to death in France. Why? Simply because he was a Protestant! By whom? By the Catholic Church! Yes, by that same church which now pretends to love her "dear separated brethren."

Indeed, in Europe torture was still enforced by all the Tribunals of the Holy Inquisition until the last century, the Pope being forced to abolish it only in 1816.

It was Napoleon, who entered Madrid in 1808, who was to abolish the Inquisition. When the Spanish Parliament in 1813 declared it incompatible with the Constitution, the Vatican *protested*. Super-Catholic Ferdinand VII restored it in 1814, with the full approval of the Church. The Holy Inquisition was finally suppressed by the Liberals in July, 1834.

The Vatican protested for decades, because Spain had suppressed the Inquisition. Why? Because the Catholic Church was persuaded, as in the past, that she had the right to IMPOSE her truth.

The belief, that it is still her duty to do so, is as alive today. It will remain so in the near and in the distant future.

The apologists of the Church assured the contemporary world that the horrors of the Inquisition will never be repeated, ever again. But the Catholic State of Croatia proved them wrong. The attempted coup of Hungary, when Cardinal Mindszenty tried to set up a totalitarian Catholic State, proved them wrong. The Catholic terrorism of Vietnam proved them wrong. The Catholic terrorism of Catholic Ireland proved them wrong.

The Catholic Church's sudden espousing of Ecumenism was a classic device to make people forget that her basic spirit of intolerance is still within her.

It must be remembered that if the Inquisition was banned, against her will, only during the middle of the last century, the Holy Office, its inspirer and instrument was "abolished" only a few years ago. In fact, that it is operating, disguised under a specious name, in the silent walls of the Vatican of today.[\[1\]](#)

One of its main current tasks is to make sure that the Croatian Holocaust and the Catholic Dictatorship of Vietnam are forgotten, and become a mere footnote of remote history.

It has already partially succeeded. Since the contemporary world at large know very little about the true nature and the background religious intrigues of these two most reprehensible episodes of Catholic fanaticism.

And this to such a degree that, unlike Hitler's and Stalin's horrific concentration camps, the Croatian ones and the Buddhists self-immolation in Vietnam, as a protest against the Vatican's religious terroristic interference, have already become taboos to the mass media of the world.

A dangerous triumph of contemporary Catholic pressure and its ecumenical and political associates. Forgetfulness and, even more, ignorance are dangerous twin brothers in our turbulent world. Since they are the breeders of unscrupulous ideological and ecclesiastical intrigues, and thus of potential new Croatias and new Vietnams.

The basic Catholic claims have never changed one single iota. The Catholic Church's insistence about her own uniqueness has remained as granitically firm now, as it has always been. These are the same claims which produced the Inquisition, Croatia and the Catholic Dictatorship of Vietnam.

If the past be an indication of the shape of things to come then, given the right opportunities and appropriate political climate, New Inquisitions, New Croatias and New Vietnams will be created again and again. When, where and how, only the future will tell.

Footnote

1. Sacred Congregation of the Faith, responsible against theological errors and heresies.

[\[Back\]](#)

Editor's Note

The *real* Jesus of the Bible *never* told anybody to persecute anybody for not agreeing with his teachings. When His disciples wanted to call down fire from Heaven on a city for not receiving Him, He sternly rebuked them:

"And they did not receive him, because his face was set to go to Jerusalem.
And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou

that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9: 53-56).

Again in the parable of the tares and the wheat Jesus told His disciples to let the true and the false believers grow *together* until the harvest at the end of the world:

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. 13:30).

[Return to Contents](#)

U.S. News and World Report

Monday, March 30, 1998

A vow of silence

Did gold stolen by Croatian fascists reach the Vatican?

BY SUSAN HEADDEN, DANA HAWKINS, AND JASON VEST

Through the nightmare of World War II that would end with 56 members of her family perishing in concentration camps, there were two days that Eta Najfeld will never forget. The first was April 10, 1941, when Najfeld, a 25-year-old Jewish medical student, watched as exuberant crowds lined the streets of Zagreb to cheer the Ustashas—the ultranationalist fascist party that the Nazis had just installed at the helm of an "independent" Croatian state. The other was three months later, when a band of Ustasha soldiers burst into her family's shop, an elegant emporium stocked with Oriental rugs, English linens, and French silks. "They took everything," says Najfeld, now 82 and living in Belgrade.

As the Nazis and their allies sent millions of Jews *and others* to their deaths, they stole billions of dollars from their victims. In the postwar chaos, and the horror of their anguish, Najfeld and most other survivors cast from their mind any thought of recovering the property they had lost. Najfeld still worries that any talk about lost wealth will somehow diminish the enormity of the Holocaust.

But in recent months, new evidence has forced victims and accomplices alike to confront that nearly forgotten question: What happened to the loot? The Nazi plunder has been traced to banks in Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, and other neutral countries that were secretly helping the Nazis stash stolen gold or launder it to buy war materiel. One state after another has opened its archives and banking records to aid the search, with one glaring exception: the Vatican.

The Vatican's continuing secrecy means the evidence is incomplete, but already

declassified documents from the archives of the United States and other nations suggest that—with the aid of Croatian Catholic priests—Ustasha plunder made its way from Croatia to Rome, and possibly to the Vatican itself. Some of the stolen wealth was used to help Croatian war criminals flee to South America.

"We make no charges against the Vatican, but we keep building a very damning picture," says Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress. "Because of their silence in the face of accumulated evidence, the failure to uncover the truth can only be laid at the doors of the Vatican."

Next month, a task force headed by Under Secretary of State Stuart Eizenstat that is investigating the role of the neutral countries is expected to issue a report that raises questions about the Vatican's wartime financial dealings. Among the documents reviewed: a declassified 1944 intelligence report noting a transfer of funds, via a Swiss bank, from Berlin's Reichsbank to the Vatican. Although there may be innocent explanations for such dealings—church assets being moved out of Germany, perhaps—the discovery of similar transactions by Swiss banks led to revelations of a huge Nazi operation to launder stolen gold with the help of neutral countries.

Church blessing. The Croatian connection, however, is the core of the new evidence that suggests the Vatican might have directly handled funds stolen from the victims of the Nazis and their allies. From 1941 to 1945, the Ustashes exterminated an estimated 500,000 Serbs, Jews, and Romany (Gypsies) and looted their property. They demanded ransom amounting to 1,00 kilograms of gold from all the Jews in Zagreb, only to ship them to concentration camps and kill them anyway. It is a matter of historical record that the Croatian Catholic Church was closely entangled with the Ustashes. In the early years of World War II, Catholic priests oversaw forced conversions of Orthodox Serbs under the aegis of the Ustasha state; Franciscan friars distributed Ustasha propaganda. Several high Catholic officials in Yugoslavia were later indicted for war crimes. They included Father Dragutin Kamber, who ordered the killing of nearly 300 Orthodox Serbs; Bishop Ivan Saric of Sarajevo, known as the "hangman of the Serbs"; and Bishop Gregory Rozman of Slovenia, a wanted Nazi collaborator. A trial held by the Yugoslav War Crimes Commission in 1946 resulted in the conviction of a half-dozen Ustasha priests, among them former Franciscan Miroslav Filipovic-Majstorovic, a commandant of the Jasenovac concentration camp where the Ustashes tortured and slaughtered hundreds of thousands with a brutality that shocked even the Nazis.

As more secret documents become public, however, one priest emerges as the most significant player of all. The Rev. Krunoslav Draganovic, a Franciscan, had been a senior official of the Ustasha committee that handled the forced conversion of Orthodox

Serbs. In 1943, the Ustasha arranged with the Croatian Catholic Church to send Father Draganovic to Rome. There he served as secretary of the Istituto San Girolamo, a seminary for Croatian monks that was in fact a center of clandestine Ustasha activity. Draganovic also became Ustasha leader Ante Pavelic's unofficial emissary to the Vatican, and de facto liaison to the Pontifical Relief Commission, a Vatican organization that aided refugees during and after the war.

The ratline. According to secret reports from the U.S. Army's Counterintelligence Corps (CIC), written just after World War II and since declassified, Draganovic and his collaborators at San Girolamo provided money, food, housing, and forged Red Cross passports for a number of Ustasha war criminals seeking to escape justice. Through an underground railroad of sympathetic priests, known as the "ratline," the Ustashas could move from Trieste, to Rome, to Genoa, and on to neutral countries—primarily Argentina—where they could live out their days unpunished and unnoticed. Along the ratline, virtually the entire Ustasha leadership went free. "All these people were escaping—and this at a time when just getting a meal in Rome was a major accomplishment," recalls William Gowen, a CIC officer in Rome after the war.

The copies of memos filed by Gowen and other members of the counterintelligence corps, now stored in U.S. Army archives at Fort Belvoir, Va., contain a wealth of detail on suspicious comings and goings at San Girolamo. The dispatches leave little doubt that the ancient walled compound at Via Tomacelli 132 was more than an ordinary monastery. "San Girolamo is honeycombed with cells of Ustasha operatives," Gowen wrote on Feb. 12, 1947. "In order to enter this monastery, one must submit to a personal search for weapons and identification.... The whole area is guarded by armed Ustasha youths in civilian clothes, and the Ustasha salute is exchanged constantly." From a source inside the compound, Gowen even managed to obtain Draganovic's secret files, which, Gowen reported on Sept. 5, 1947, "indicate clearly Draganovic's involvement in aiding and abetting the Ustasha to escape into South America."

Another Croatian priest living at San Girolamo was also active in smuggling war criminals, documents show. A recently declassified memo, believed to have been written in 1946 by an agent of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)—the precursor of the CIA—reports that a priest called Father Golik was supplying false passports and money to members of the Ustasha. Golik, the memo says, was alleged to be "chief sponsor of all Croats resident in Rome, with special attention to the needs of former Ustasha members." The memo reports allegations that the Ustashas "are given a monthly allowance of 6,000 lire per person [the equivalent of \$2,700 today], in addition to the privilege of cheap meals at the San Girolamo mess."

Croatian Catholic officials were funneling money to war criminals even after they escaped to Argentina, documents show. According to cable intercepts cited in a 1947 U. S. diplomatic report, Pavelic escaped in November 1947 to Buenos Aires, where he was said to have been met by a retinue of Catholic priests. Newly declassified documents also show that Bishop Rozman was funneling money to South America from a Swiss bank account set up "to aid refugees of the Catholic religion." U.S. military attaché Davis Harrington reported on March 9, 1948, that Rozman "is going to Bern to take care of these finances. The money is in a Swiss bank, and he plans to have most of it sent through to Italy and from there sent to the Ustashas in Argentina."

Further clues about the path of Ustasha gold are provided by Croatian National Bank records uncovered last fall by an American historian of Croatian descent. According to Jere Jareb, author of *Gold and Money of the Independent State of Croatia Moved Abroad*, the documents show that 288 kilograms of gold was removed from the Croatian National Bank and the state treasury on May 7, 1945—the day that Germany capitulated. By Draganovic's own testimony, part of that treasure landed in his hands. The "Golden Priest," as Draganovic was known, acknowledged to the Yugoslav War Crimes Commission that he doled the money out to Ustasha soldiers and Croatian civilian refugees. (Though called to testify, Draganovic was never charged. He later returned to Yugoslavia and died there in 1983).

When in Rome. But does any of the evidence implicate the Vatican itself? The strongest indication so far is a memo that first prompted the State Department's interest. The memo, dated Oct. 21, 1946, was discovered last summer in the declassified files of the U.S. Treasury Department. Written by OSS agent Emerson Bigelow, it reports that money sent by Ustasha from Croatia to Rome after the war had been partly intercepted by the British, but that 200 million Swiss francs—the equivalent of \$170 million today—were being held in the Vatican for safekeeping. According to "rumor," the memo says, the money was being used to finance Croatian war criminals in exile.

When the Bigelow memo was released last year, the Vatican swiftly dismissed it, insisting that the charges could not be true. But some researchers who have studied World War II intelligence matters note that other archival documents counter the notion that a Vatican-Ustasha link is implausible on its face. One is a British diplomatic memo from Oct. 17, 1947, cited in the 1991 book *Unholy Trinity* by journalist Mark Aarons and former Justice Department Nazi-hunter John Loftus. According to the memo, a San Giralomo priest named Father Mandic was a "liaison to the Vatican" who was involved in converting Ustasha gold, jewelry, and foreign exchange into Italian lire.

Other reports mention Ustashas meeting with Vatican officials or even living in the

Vatican. The British Foreign Office reported in January 1947 that Pavelic himself, by that time a wanted war criminal, was living "within the Vatican City." An earlier report by Gowen, in October 1946, noted that Pavelic was in Rome and in contact with Draganovic. Documents include accounts of Ustashas being hidden at the pope's summer residence at Castel Gandolfo and being seen driving in Rome in cars with Vatican license plates. The recently declassified Golik memo reports that Ustashas ate at the papal mess and that Father Golik was "declared to be in close contact with the Vatican."

The Vatican's tolerance of the Ustasha during the war was no secret. On the recommendation of Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac—who had blessed Pavelic at the opening of the Croatian parliament—the pope established informal diplomatic relations with the independent state of Croatia, and his envoy made regular rounds of Ustasha headquarters. In 1941 and in 1943, at a time when his excesses were known, Pavelic was granted two private audiences with Pius XII. The pope explained that he received the Ustasha leader simply as a Catholic, not as head of the Croatian state. The pontiff's decision was widely reported—and widely deplored—at the time. In July 1941, Francis D'Arcy Osborne, the British ambassador to the Vatican, wrote: "[Pius's] reception of Pavelic ... has done more to damage his reputation in this country than any other act since the war began."

Bound to silence. What all this intelligence means is at the heart of the State Department-led investigation. Vatican officials insist they are hiding nothing because they have nothing to hide. But they say they cannot allow outside researchers free access to their archives because the collection contains sensitive personnel files. As a general rule, the Vatican releases church documents only after about 75 years. "I am bound to silence," said the Rev. Marcel Chappin of the Vatican Secretariat of State, when pressed to comment. Chappin said that the Vatican has already published a voluminous account of its role in World War II, including a discussion of the controversy surrounding Pius XII, who kept silent on the Nazi atrocities because he believed provocation of the Nazis would lead to more persecution and because he considered the greater enemy to be atheistic communism. Vatican defenders note that the church saved tens of thousands of Jews during the war, and they urge that current suspicions be viewed in the context of the chaotic times: Refugees were streaming into Vatican City after the war, and it is quite possible that funds intended for these refugees were used to help war criminals without the pope's knowledge." The question is what did the Vatican's own leadership know?" says William Slaney, the State Department's historian and author of the Nazi gold reports. "We want the Vatican . . . to deal with [its] share of this dreadful event."



Pius XII. Defended by Vatican



Church and State. Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac (right), at an official Croatian ceremony in 1941.



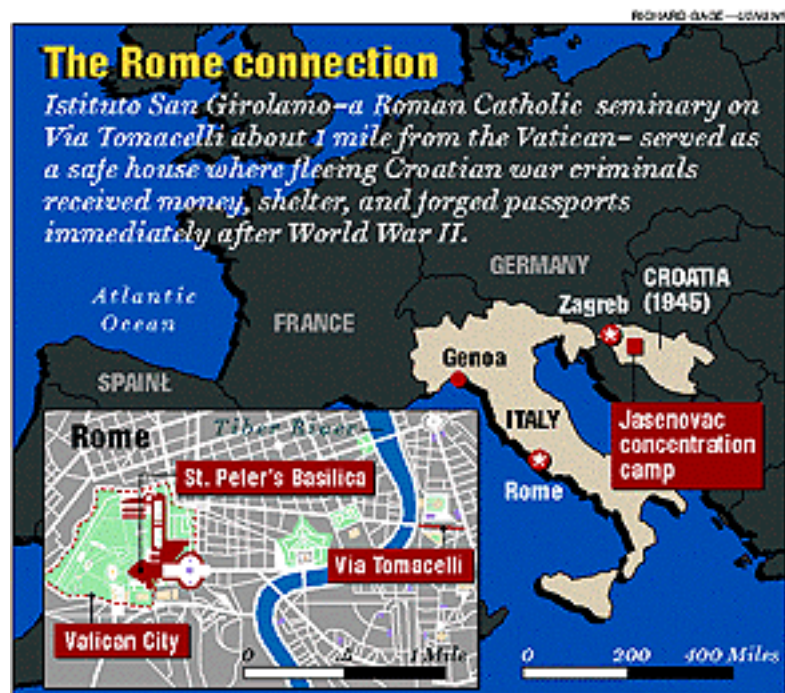
Genocide. Ustasha soldiers pose with the corpses of five Serbs. By war's end, they would slaughter hundred of thousands more.



Forced Conversion. The Ustashas promised the Serbs that they would be spared death if they converted from Eastern Orthodoxy to Roman Catholicism. Thousands converted, only to be killed anyway.



Waiting for restitution. Elderly Holocaust survivors, many of whom lost entire families in concentration camps, listen as Jewish leaders in Zagreb explain the process of filing for restitution from Swiss banks that received Nazi gold.



[U.S. News and World Report Online](http://www.usnews.com)

[Return to Contents](#)

Holocaust Archive Pictures



Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac (right), at an official Croatian ceremony in 1941



Ustashi soldiers pose with the corpses of five Serbs. By war's end, they would slaughter over 700,000 more!!



Forced Conversion. The Ustashi promised the Serbs that they would be spared death if they converted from Eastern Orthodoxy to Roman Catholicism. Thousand converted, only to be killed anyway.



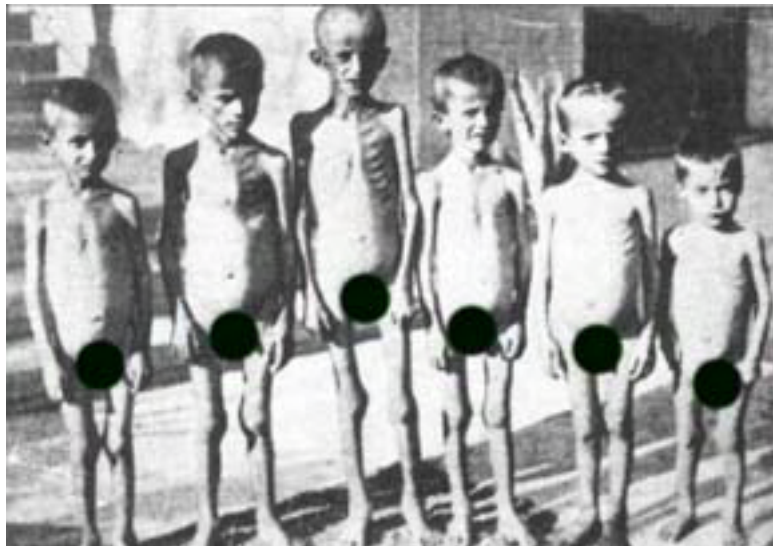
Elderly Holocaust survivors, many of whom lost entire families in concentration camps, listen as Jewish leaders in Zagreb explain the process of filing for restitution from Swiss banks that received Nazi gold.



Archbishop Stepinac greets Ante Pavelic on the anniversary of the Independent State of Croatia.



Entrance to the infamous concentration camp of Jasenovac. The sign reads, "Work service of the Ustashi Defense Assembly Camp Nr. III."



Serb children after their rescue from the Ustashi camp.



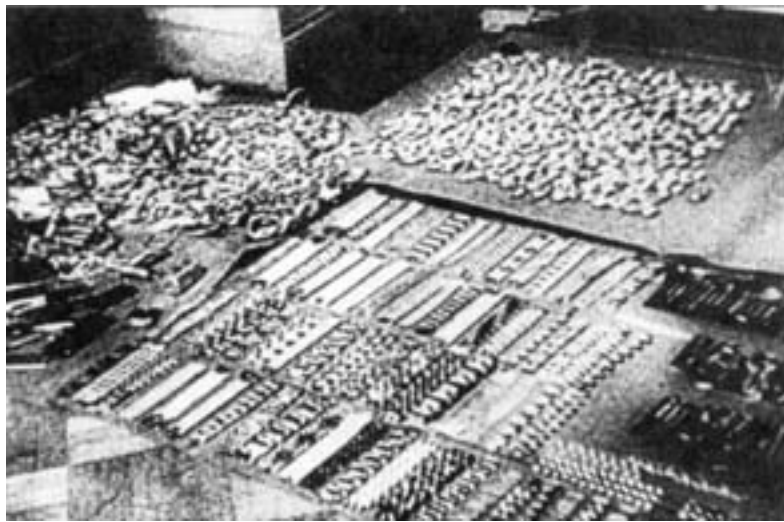
In the camp of Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska about 8000 children died.



1941: Children in the Stara Gradiska concentration camp dying of slow starvation. The government of the satellite state of Croatia ordered caustic soda to be added to their food in order to eliminate them.



In Jasenovac and other camps, the Ustashi broke the jaws of the victims and removed the gold crowns, took away the medallions, and took the hidden gold from the rich prisoners. The gold ended up in the palace of Archbishop Stepinac and was later shipped to Rome!!



Gold watches taken from Serb and Jewish victims and hidden in the residence of the Archbishop of Zagreb, where they were found after the retreat of the Ustashi.



Ante Pavelic had a *hobby* of collecting *human eyes*!! One day a visitor came to his headquarters and noticed what looked like a bowl of oysters on the table. "Oysters from Dalmatia" he exclaimed. "No" said Pavelic "this is a bowl of Serb eyes"



The Serb Milos Teslic, a famous industrialist and philanthropist, was gruesomely tortured and murdered by the Ustashi.



Ustashi carrying the head of a Serbian Orthodox priest.



Nuns marching with Croatian Nazi legionaires.



Archbishop Stepinac and the papal nuncio Marcone leave a celebration; behind them is a German General.



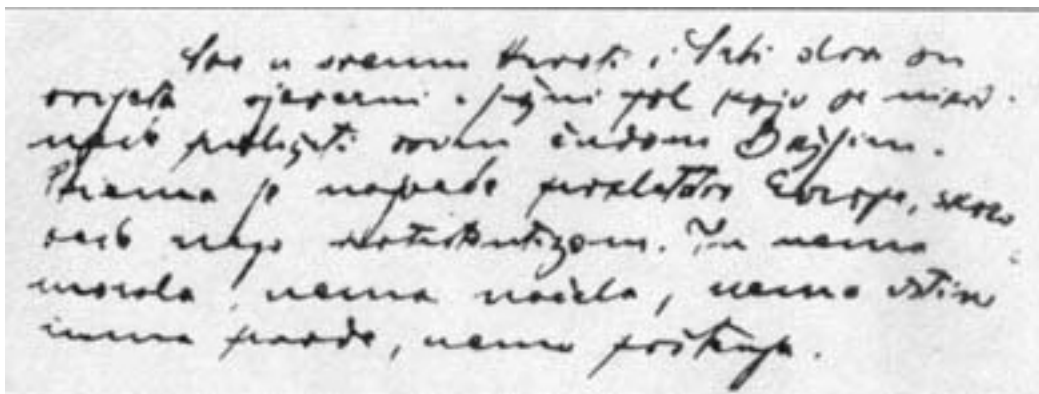
The papal nuncio Marcone (in the white robes of the Dominican order), Archbishop Stepinac next to him, and around them sit leading military representatives of Nazi Germany and the NDH.



Members of Pavelic's bodyguard swear allegiance unto death to the Croatian leader and receive the "church's" blessing!!



Reception of the Ustashi Police special unit at the Vatican in Sept. 1943.



Archbishop Stepinac said this on March 28, 1941:

All in all, Croats and Serbs are of two worlds, northpole and southpole, never will they be able to get together unless by a miracle of God. The schism (Eastern Orthodoxy) is the greatest curse in Europe, almost greater than Protestantism. Here there

is no moral, no principles, no truth, no justice, no honesty.

Poison Gas

Poison gas was also used as a method of extermination. You can *always* tell that the Vatican is involved by their use of poison. [Dr. Alberto Rivera](#) said that as a Jesuit priest he had to show proficiency in *all* types of poison.

The first experiments with poison gas were carried out in the veterinary chamber in the work room of the so-called "Economy," where mangy horses were healed. The horses were handled in such a way that the rump was in the chamber and only the head protruded. For the treatment, sulfur dioxide was used. They also tried this poison on people, as well as Zyklon. In the first experiments, it was discovered, however, that the victims, because of the permeability of the walls and the crude introduction of the gas, did not die so quickly and so easily and that they also revealed the cite of their torture by their terrible screams. In this chamber, other gases were also tried for killing prisoners, but without success.

The above quote and a few of the less graphic pictures are from the book *The Yugoslav Auschwitz and the Vatican* by Vladimir Dedijer published by Prometheus Books, Buffalo, New York, ©1988.

Editor's Note

The Ustashi took pictures for two reasons: One, they believed Hitler would win the war, and two, they would have *evidence* to show their bosses that they did a *good job* of exterminating!!

[Return to Contents](#)

Newsday

Saturday May 2, 1998

By Roy Gutman

WASHINGTON BUREAU

Washington—The United States released a document Friday that said at least 120,000 people were killed at a camp run by a World War II concentration camp commander from Croatia, who was arrested at his home in Argentina on Thursday.

The State Department released a German document detailing the activities of Dinko Sakic, 76 who was arrested at his home south of Buenos Aires after Argentina received Croatia's formal request for his extradition to stand trial.

The full death toll at the Jasenovac camp has not been determined. Serbian politicians use figures of 600,000 to 700,000 Serbs, Jews and Gypsies, while Croatian President Franjo Tudjman speaks of 30,000. Until now, leaders of Zagreb's tiny Jewish community have used estimates of 80,000 to 100,000.

In newspaper and television interviews, Sakic said he served in senior command posts at the Jasenovac camp for three years and commander for one year. But he has denied that anyone died at the camp other than from illness.

Meanwhile, Croatia's national archives has been unable to locate the government's documentation on the Jasenovac camp except for three documents, according to Croatian press reports. Friday, the U.S. State Department welcomed Sakic's arrest and Croatia's plan to put him on trial and, bearing in mind the missing documents, produced the first evidence from U.S. war crimes archives.

The document, handed out to reporters, was a top-secret December, 1943, German Wehrmacht report on senior officers of the Ustasha, the Croatian fascists, who took power in 1941 with support from Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

It said the first commander of the Jasenovac camp, Ustasha Maj. Max Luberic, had

ordered 80,000 people executed at Alt-Gradiska, a subsidiary camp to Jasenovac, 120,000 at Jasenovac and 20,000 at other camps. The report called Luberic a "pathological personality" who had personally taken part in the slaughters, "a willing tool of the Poglavnik [Ustasha leader Ante Pavelic] capable of anything" and "the driving force for the bloody developments in Croatia." The German military, it said, "has repeatedly called for Luberic's removal, but without success." Shortly after the report was issued, Luberic was sent to Zagreb and Sakic took charge. Sakic had married Luberic's sister and, in an interview with the Zagreb weekly *Magazin*, in 1995, said he had been Luberic's "most trusted and closest soldier." Sakic was named camp commander after Luberic.

[Return to Contents](#)

It's Official - Mass Murderer is "Blessed"

Croatia, Oct. 3, 1998



Pope John Paul II beatified Cardinal Aloysius Stepinac at a huge open-air service at the shrine of Marija Bistrica, the most important place of pilgrimage for Roman Catholics in Croatia. This is the final step to making him a *saint* in the Roman Catholic Institution.

During World War II the Independent State of Croatia was to be 100% Roman Catholic. Anybody not conforming was to be totally liquidated. The *conservative* number of Serbs killed was around 700.000, but the Serbian Orthodox Church puts the number at a million and a half!!

[Mrs. Roosevelt](#), the wife of the U.S. President said that this Holocaust was:

One of the worst, if not the worst crimes of the war.



Zagreb Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac (right), at an official Croatian ceremony in 1941.

Editor's note

How can anybody fail to see that the Papacy is that Man of Sin and Son of Perdition predicted by the Lord Jesus Christ and his holy Apostles.

[Return to Contents](#)